

Interconnected Traditions

Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan

Volume 2: The Medieval World, Judaeo-Arabic,
and Neo-Aramaic

EDITED BY AARON D. HORNKOHL, NADIA VIDRO,
JANET C. E. WATSON, ELEANOR COGHILL,
MAGDALEN M. CONNOLLY, AND BENJAMIN M. OUTHWAITE



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TRADITIONS
VOLUME 2

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VOLUME II:
THE MEDIEVAL WORLD, JUDAEO-
ARABIC, AND NEO-ARAMAIC



Solomon Schechter studying the fragments of the Cairo Geniza, ca 1898;
photographer: unknown; public domain

C. THE MEDIEVAL WORLD AND JUDAEO-ARABIC

TO WHAT EXTENT IS GENIZA RESEARCH ON JEWISH LITURGY A CONTINUATION OF THE WORK OF LEOPOLD ZUNZ?*

Stefan Reif

In the Epilogue to his insightful, comprehensive, and beautifully written study of Leopold (Yomtov Lipman) Zunz's life and work, Ismar Schorsch (2016a, 240) makes the following comparison between the subject of his volume and Solomon Schechter:

Emblematic of the explosion of new knowledge ignited by Zunz is the iconic staged photograph of Solomon Schechter poring over the hoard of manuscripts in Cambridge that he had ransacked from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo in the winter of 1896–97. He fully sensed the transformative impact of its vast holdings and the generations of scholars it would take to unravel them. The photo enables us to visualize the perseverance, drudgery, loneliness, and skill required to master the piles of written remnants of a culture and era not our own.... The photo also epitomizes Zunz's ceaseless quest for new knowledge. The received image of

* It is a pleasure to dedicate this essay to Geoffrey Khan, who worked closely with me in the University of Cambridge Library Genizah Research Unit for many years and who has made such a powerful contribution to the advancement of Geniza research.

Judaism in 1818 rested on but a fraction of the literary texts it had engendered over the past millennium and a half. Its universe consisted largely of dark matter inaccessible to a state of mind encumbered by dogma or animus.

On reading those remarks, it occurred to me that it might be of interest to assess precisely the degree to which there was a direct link between Zunz's work and the Geniza scholarship of Schechter's generation and the one that followed it, especially in the field of Jewish liturgy. The study of that field has, after all, been illuminated by the efforts of the founding figure of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, and no less by the discoveries made among the worn, torn, and fragmentary items brought to Cambridge by the red-haired rabbi from Rumania and formally gifted by him and the Master of St John's College, Charles Taylor, to the University Library in 1898. To that end, it will be necessary to begin with Zunz's world and to comment on the earlier and contemporary acquisition and study of Hebrew manuscripts and on the relationship between non-Jewish and Jewish scholars in connection with those activities. How did they view each other and their relative competences and what motivated their interest in early Hebrew sources? This will inevitably lead to some consideration of anti-Jewish feelings and statements, as well as to the Jewish struggle for recognition not only in the social and political spheres, but also in the universities. Reference will also be made to the role of the rabbinical seminaries in the development of critical and historical approaches to the literary sources. Essential to our treatment will be an overall introduction to the scholarly characteristics of Zunz and a close examination of his methodology and its cultural and geographical orientation. This brief

presentation will then move on to the field of liturgy and summarise Zunz's aims and the degree to which they were met. It will then be possible to offer a comparison between the situation as it pertained to the world of Jewish learning prior to the Geniza discoveries and its equivalent after scholars had begun to exploit the literary treasures from Egypt and to adjust their horizons and outlooks as a result.

1.0. Historical Context

A nineteenth-century development that proved highly productive for historians of the medieval world was the expansion of the Hebrew and Jewish manuscript collections in the major academic libraries of North America and Europe. Through the agency of travellers, explorers, and booksellers, as well as academic researchers themselves, hundreds of codices, many of them dating from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, were added to the literary treasures that had already been amassed during the explosion of learning that had characterised the periods of the Protestant Reformation and the various reactions to it. There had been precedents for Christian interest in Hebrew texts in earlier periods, but the late medieval and early modern eras saw an explosion of such interest and a passion for compiling extensive collections of Hebraica and Judaica. There were intellectuals who may, in retrospect, perhaps be defined as judaeophiles (John Selden springs immediately to mind), but the majority of those attempting to master Hebrew language and literature were motivated by missionary zeal or a form of messianic expectation. That said, their activities undoubtedly promoted an intense interest in

Jews and Judaism. The competing ambitions of the imperial powers were expressed not only in the social, political, and economic activities, but also in their intellectual pursuits (Reif 1997, 8–12). By the middle of the nineteenth century, many of the major academic centres and research libraries of Europe (including western Russia) and North America could take pride in what they called their ‘oriental’ collections, including, of course, many Hebrew and Jewish items, and those that had not yet arranged the compilation of catalogues describing their holdings soon had to set about rectifying this omission (for general information about the Hebrew manuscripts included here, see Richler 2014).

Historians have chronicled how the medieval and early modern monarchies, nobilities, and churches persecuted the Jews in all manner of cruel ways, including death, torture, forced conversion, and expulsion, and sought to demonstrate the superiority of their religious traditions and the obsolete, inadequate, and even cruel nature of Judaism (see, recently, Julius 2010; Wistrich 2010; Goldstein 2011). Recent research has, however, pointed to examples of non-Jews and Jews educating themselves about the religious ‘other’, sometimes exchanging ideas and, on occasion, even being influenced in their theological ideas and practices (examples in Cohen 2021 and Krinis 2021). Despite a tendency to conceal such cooperation, a clinical examination of developments within Islam, Christianity, and Judaism testifies to their existence, especially in periods of peace and prosperity that precipitated a burgeoning of intellectual activity. The movements towards the emancipation of minorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led the Jews to believe that they would soon

see the removal of all obstacles and there were times when this seemed likely and major non-Jewish figures who championed such a cause. At the same time, new reasons for anti-Jewish feeling and bias were presented and argued and such animosity found a home in the portals of academe no less than in the backstreets of impoverished areas. It had, for some centuries, often been the case that Jews—and not necessarily those who had apostatised—could be found useful for teaching Hebrew and expounding Jewish texts at centres of higher education. Because they were religiously disqualified, they could not be appointed to official posts, but they made their contributions and it was not unusual for others to claim the benefit.

2.0. Leopold Zunz

This trend took on a new form in the second half of the nineteenth century. Jewish scholars were invited to compile the catalogues of Hebraica and Judaica at leading universities. For example, Steinschneider described the printed books and Neubauer the manuscripts at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and Schiller-Szinessy prepared a catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts at Cambridge University Library. Once the religious tests were removed, Neubauer was appointed to a readership at Oxford in 1884 and Schiller-Szinessy to a similar post in Cambridge in 1879. Even more remarkably, Neubauer was a favoured (but unsuccessful) candidate for the post of Bodley's Librarian in 1882 and Schiller-Szinessy a surprising (but unsuccessful) candidate for the Regius Chair of Hebrew at Cambridge in that same year (for details about non-Jewish and Jewish interchange, see Reif 1997, 18–20;

1999; 2025). These developments took place in the latter part of Zunz's life, when he had recognised that his plans for Jewish studies at German universities had not proved attractive to those—non-Jewish and Jewish alike—with the potential to change things. Zunz in his youth may have seen Böckh and Wolf as his heroes, but they, for their part, were impressed by neither his ethnicity nor his academic plans. Böckh was on the committee that rejected Zunz's suggestion for a chair in Jewish History and Literature at the Humboldt University in Berlin on the grounds that this would only encourage the Jews to remain separate, instead of effecting their ultimate, and obviously much preferred, assimilation (Schorsch 2016a, 169). Wolf's view of the "Hebrew nation" was that it had "not raised itself to a level of culture that would permit it to be considered a scholarly people" (quoted from the German by Dunkelgrün 2020, 65–66). On the other hand, according to Zunz, they showed no personal malice to Jews and, as Leon Wieseltier (1981, 137) has put it, "anyone at all familiar with developments in early nineteenth-century philology will recognize in Zunz's organization of Jewish studies the lofty, meticulous, scholarly ambience of F. A. Wolf and August Wilhelm Boeckh."

If inspiring savants, such as Böckh and Wolf, could at least tolerate Jews, as long they behaved as true Germans believed they should, there were some Christian Hebraists who expressed intense animosity toward Jews and Jewish learning, in general, and to Zunz, in particular. When the distinguished orientalist Paul de Lagarde died in 1892, Adolf Neubauer acknowledged his eminence, his minute method, and the "great gap in many

branches of learning” left by his demise, and also made reference to his joviality in company. At the same time, he decried his haughtiness and arrogance towards academic colleagues and noted that he had been a member of the Prussian Conservative Party and had exceeded Heinrich Ewald (a Protestant theologian and biblical exegete at Göttingen, whom Neubauer had met in Oxford) in antisemitic prejudice (Neubauer 1862; 1892). Perhaps, like his friend and colleague, Archibald Sayce, Neubauer had heard how Lagarde had had all his Hebrew books bound in pigskin, in order, as he put it, “to keep the dirty fingers of the Jews from off them” (Sayce 1923, 53). Elisabeth Hollender (2003) has chronicled a debate between Lagarde and Jewish scholars, which was set off by a doctoral dissertation by Lagarde’s pupil Ludwig Techen on two Göttingen *maḥzor* manuscripts. Techen attacked the methodology of Zunz and other Jewish scholars, referring to “Zunz’s penchant to cast subjective, unimportant and worthless material into bombastic language.” Techen’s Jewish critics pointed to the impudence of a novice who knew little Hebrew and nothing about Jewish liturgy. Lagarde came to Techen’s defence in ‘Lipman Zunz und seine Verehrer’, and, after a second round, in ‘Juden und Indogermanen’. The latter contained a section of unrestrained antisemitic invective, but even in Lagarde’s scholarly arguments, there is an undertone of antisemitism and contempt. Neubauer, too, entered the debate and, in his obituary of Lagarde, took the opportunity to defend Leopold Zunz against Lagarde’s unjustified and derisory dismissal of one of his translations (Neubauer 1862; 1892).

When, in 1873, Zunz published his 53-page essay ‘Bibel-kritisches’, comprising a philological study of selected books of the Hebrew Bible, Ewald mocked this Jewish attempt to compete with Christian biblical scholarship that had centuries of research to its credit. Earlier, in 1860, as Schorsch records, Ewald had “dismissed in one fell swoop the scholarly value of Zunz’s recently published two volumes on liturgy.” For Ewald, Zunz was no more than “an utterly one-sided Jew lost in the biases of his hatred” (Schorsch 2016a, 195, 218). In sum, the German patriotism and the religious commitments of many Christian scholars in Germany meant that they could not easily accommodate themselves to Jewish attempts to become genuine Germans, to offer a Jewish perspective on historical study of the Bible, and to present rabbinic literature as a genuine cultural achievement of interest and value to the wider world of learning. Most of them saw the German Protestant culture of their day as the epitome of philosophical accuracy and theological truth and, try as Zunz might, he could not persuade them that Jewish history and literature might also, at least to some degree, constitute a key to an important part of human thought, religious teaching, and poetic achievement.

While Zunz in his younger years was of the opinion that sound, scientific study of Jewish literature would surely convince the German academic establishment that Jews and Jewish Studies could become an integral part of university establishments, there were co-religionists of his who were also outstanding scholars, but who felt less inclined to await the beneficence of Euro-

pean centres of higher education. They not only wished to prepare Jewish students for careers in the rabbinate and the teaching profession, but were also of a mind to educate them to think, research, and write in a modern critical fashion, rather than in the style of the traditional *yeshivot*—but always to the benefit of their religious communities. To that end, rabbinical and teaching seminaries were founded, ranging in religious commitment from reform to orthodox, in France as early as 1829, in Breslau in 1854, in London in 1855, in Vienna in 1860 and 1893, in Berlin in 1872 and 1873, in Cincinnati in 1875, in Budapest in 1877, and in New York in 1886 and 1896. The teachers in such institutions were among the nineteenth century's most brilliant, inspiring, and productive scholars of Hebraica and Judaica and included, in Europe, such names as Zecharias Frankel, Michael Friedländer, Meir Friedmann, Isaak Hirsch Weiss, Abraham Geiger, Julius Guttmann, David Kaufmann, Wilhelm Bacher, and Israel Lewy (see Myers 1995, 25–29; Feiner 2002, 133–37; Leicht 2002). Somewhat remarkably, Zunz was averse to such an approach to Jewish learning. As Schorsch (2016a, 224) has succinctly written,

Kaufmann's profile was not prone to endear him to Zunz. Zunz disliked Frankel and Graetz in equal measure and derided their brand of scholarship as *Glaubenswissenschaft* (his term) whose parameters and conclusions were dictated by tenants [*sic*] of faith.

Zunz was of the opinion that rabbinical seminaries “fell short of his hard-fought-for ideal of institutionalizing critical Jewish scholarship as a *bona fide* field of research within the German university.”

From his earliest publications, Zunz expressed animosity toward traditional talmudic study, believing that it could never attain the levels of historical analysis and dispassionate assessment that he thought were characteristic of his university education and his personal research. He opted to see his people's ideas, language, and literature not so much as a reflection of narrow religious commitment, but rather as the well-rounded products of a *Kulturvolk* which was deserving of recognition as such by contemporary European civilisation. His religion was not one of fanaticism, antiquated ritual, and vulgar demonstration, but the sound basis of all education, ennobling thought and behaviour. His research was centred on a passion for archives, bibliography, philology, Hebrew language, history, and literature that was driven by intense industry as well as a meticulous concern for the tiniest detail. This did not demand disengagement from the communal and political, but was designed to contribute, in one way or another, to the emancipation of the Jews, both within their own communities and in the wider world. Zunz saw the need to comb manuscript and printed editions for a mass of evidence. He made use of many editions and consulted numerous manuscripts, as in 1855, when he visited London and Paris and examined 100 printed books and 180 manuscripts. In 1863 he made a trip to Italy to consult its rich collections of Hebraica, about which he wrote on his return, bewailing the fact that many of the catalogue entries displayed non-Jewish ignorance of Jewish history and literature (Schorsch 2016a, 15, 57, 96, 130, 140, 214). Zunz regarded it as essential for scholarship to be generative and wished to apply the new academic disciplines to Jewish liturgy, because

that subject was especially important to him. He saw the synagogue as an “expression of Jewish nationhood, the guarantor of its religious existence,” liturgy as reflecting Jewish historical experience and religious development, the sermon as an ancient educational process that had continued through the ages, and the liturgical poets as the composers of great poetry (see Schorsch 2016a, 57, 80–84, 196, 201–8; 2016b, 11). As Schorsch (2016a, 244) has put it, “Zunz invested it [i.e., the synagogue] with a noble pedigree. By reshaping the synagogue as the locus of midrash and piyut, he foregrounded the spiritual and responsive nature of Judaism.”

It was with these thoughts in mind that he wrote his study of Jewish homiletics in 1832 (Zunz 1832) and his three studies of synagogal poetry between 1855 and 1867 (Zunz 1855; 1859; 1865–1867). The first presented Jewish liturgical poetry as worthy literature and translated many examples. The second linked the poems with the development of the various medieval rites. The third dealt with the lives and works of the poets and, as Schorsch tells us, “Zunz referenced 5,964 piyyutim and nearly 1,000 paytanim, despite the daunting fact that the majority of both were either unpublished or unknown” (on the research agenda behind these publications, see Schorsch 2016a, 195–96). On the basis of these works, Schorsch’s outstanding analysis, and a fresh look at *Die Ritus*, it is possible to reconstruct aspects of Zunz’s methods and achievements, especially as they relate to liturgy. He made many insightful assessments of the development of the various rites, referring broadly to their origins, influences,

and development. Contrary to the scholarly fashion, he paid attention to Ashkenazi as well as Sefardi trends and achievements, although it has immediately to be added that he did not see the original Ashkenazi rite as reflected in the customs of the Polish communities of the early modern period and of his own day (Schorsch 2016a, 33, 43, 135–36, 143, 155, 204–5). He had little to offer on the rites of the Near East, including the land of Israel and Babylonia, but he was aware of this, writing that “the synagogues in Persia, Kabul and Bokhara still await reports by suitably qualified travellers.”¹

Apart from some occasional notes, the founder and master of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* generally gave no detailed textual variations within the different rites, but he did provide footnotes that listed the sources from which he had derived his data. Zunz sometimes referred to the non-liturgical aspects of synagogal activity, expressing himself in favour of some, while he was critical, or simply descriptive, of others. He was strongly of the opinion that study should be motivated by rigorous scientific and historical considerations, not apologetic ones. That was one of his complaints about the work of Abraham Geiger (see Schorsch 2016a, 93, 123, 138–41). He approved of the idea of reforming the prayers, but not radically; for example, he was in favour of maintaining *brit mila* and *tefillin*. He saw a need to introduce vernacular sermons, but questioned the observance of *Tish‘a Be-ʿAv*, which

¹ Zunz (1859, 57): “Die Synagogen in Persien, Kabul, Bokhara warten noch eines kundigen Reisebeschreibers.” See also Schorsch (2016a, 200).

appears to have brought him into conflict with one of the communities which engaged him (see Schorsch 2016a, 51–52, 78, 82, 116–22). His idea that genuine scholarship had to be generative was to be applied not only in academia, but also in the communal, religious, and political fields. The study of manuscripts and editions stood at the centre of Jewish studies for him, and he deeply regretted that the desperate need for that discipline to be adopted in the universities remained unfulfilled (see Schorsch 2016a, x, 2–3, 63, 87, 130, 168–70, 242–43; on Zunz’s detailed political agenda, see Schorsch 2016a, 156–81). In sum, Zunz provided a wealth of raw material and many useful tools with which to rake, comb, and utilise it.

A glance at *Die Ritus* (since there is insufficient space here for more) exemplifies the degree to which Zunz was insightful in his historical understanding of Jewish prayer (the translations are my own). At the beginning of its existence, the ‘*amida* was “neither genuinely edited nor universally obligatory,” and *minḥa* was joined with ‘*arvit* before nightfall “when people had to earn their bread by peddling in villages” (Zunz 1859, 1, 8). In the talmudic period, no finalised or immutable form of the prayers was yet established and during communal worship congregants “listened to the prayer-leader and whatever was required of the individual was entrusted to memory” (Zunz 1859, 1, 15). The prayer-leader’s importance grew with the development of such worship, “with the deteriorating knowledge of the Hebrew language, and with the flourishing of poetry and grammar, and the increasing pleasure of singing” (Zunz 1859, 6). *Minhag* often “stood its ground against distinguished scholarly opinions as well

as halakhic prohibitions” and innumerable ideas and customs owed their origin and progress to “co-existence with other peoples” (Zunz 1859, 4, 12). A number of customs relating to the deceased were borrowed from earlier Christian practice. Various geonic innovations were made in response to the rising power and influence of Karaism and our version of the prayer-book of the ninth-century Amram Gaon is “no earlier than 1100” (Zunz 1859, 9, 16–17). As for those who thought their grammatical knowledge superior to that of earlier writers, his comment was that “doctrinaire correctors of language make poor text critics” (Zunz 1859, 233). As for mysticism, Zunz expresses himself in no uncertain terms: “pure and impure people, competent and incompetent, savaged the divine service and prayers... they were no longer explained but rather obscured.... Even thicker fog envelops the liturgical contemplations of the author of the Zohar” (Zunz 1859, 24–25). This, sad to say, appears today to have been not a little tendentious.

There is no doubt that Zunz succeeded in bestriding the narrow world of Jewish learning “like a Colossus and... we petty men walk under his huge legs and peep about to find ourselves dishonourable graves.” At a respectable distance from the Colossus of a century and a half, it may be in order to refer to some of his shortcomings, before we estimate the degree to which Jewish liturgists in post-Geniza times were in debt to him. One need not subscribe to the offensive and vindictive opinions of Ewald, Techen, and Lagarde in order to note the degree to which Zunz’s obsession with the minutest data at times threatens to obscure for the reader of his liturgical *magna opera* any clear view of the

larger historical picture. In spite of Zunz's hesitations about the nature of Graetz's scholarship—the younger Jewish historian had more than a little justification when he complained that “Dr Zunz's more bewildering than illuminating heaps of notes and lists of names hardly facilitated my work” (cited by Schorsch 2016a, 186)—Graetz was inclined to stress the national element in Jewish history that had a political and social side to it, while for Zunz *national* meant *cultural*. As twentieth-century developments clearly demonstrated, Graetz's view became the dominant one. If we may revert again to the matter of graves, there were also some distinctly funereal—even, ultimately, pessimistic—aspects to the Jewish *Weltanschauung* of Zunz and his loyal academic follower, Moritz Steinschneider. As Charles H. Manekin (2006, 239–51) has argued, the latter may not have been quite so negative about the practice and future of Judaism as Gershom Scholem famously suggested in 1945, but in response to the rise of political Zionism, he did, according to his student Gotthold Weil, state, in what was perhaps an offhand remark, that the history of the Jews had ended in 1848 and that all that was left to do was to give its remains a decent burial. Zunz's commitment to nineteenth-century liberalism may be seen to have clashed somewhat with his commitment to the future of the Jewish people. His mockery of Jewish mystical trends arose out of a less than balanced evaluation of Jewish spirituality, and his lenses were Euro-centred, with little capacity for viewing Eastern Europe, or for looking beyond to what was in his day regarded as the ‘Orient’. These few reservations notwithstanding, the scholars who discovered, deciphered, and debated the contents of the Cairo

Geniza (or, more accurately, *Genizot*), inherited much from Zunz and his liturgical scholarship. Before we assess that inheritance more precisely, a few words should be devoted to the uniqueness of the Cairo finds.

3.0. The Cairo Geniza

It is remarkable fact that the source that has proved to be by far the richest for the serious study of Judaism in the medieval Islamic world was virtually unknown until almost a thousand years after the period that it so vividly portrays. In addition to being, undoubtedly, the most extensive source for that topic, it also has a number of remarkable—and, at times, unique—features. While so many other supplies of data consist of secondary items, copied from other sources, many of the Geniza texts constitute primary evidence, mostly in manuscript, but sometimes even in print. As such, the Geniza collections demand the meticulous attention of scholars of Jewish medieval life. While some are earlier and other later, the bulk of the Geniza folios may safely be assigned to the tenth through the thirteenth centuries and fill a huge gap in Jewish cultural history. They relate to individuals, incidents, and ideas that are by no means limited to Cairo and to Egypt, but range from as far west as France to as far east as India. The size of the collection is in itself of major significance—some 200,000 items yielding about twice that number of folios in the various scholarly centres in which the materials are housed.²

² For general information about the Geniza's overall importance to numerous fields, as discussed here and below, see Reif (2000); Glickman

There is little similar material that is contemporaneous with the Geniza texts and against which it can be judged. While it is not uncommon for the manuscripts of the late medieval and early modern periods to constitute substantial and attractive codices produced by professional scribes, the Geniza texts are often merely fragmentary remnants of small, amateur, and even primitive collections of folios. There is also a danger in trying to reconstruct the missing sections, since there is a fair chance that part of the missing text actually exists in another library. What is more, while major codices of later centuries often provide details of author, scribe, provenance, and date (or at least some of these data), the average Geniza text comes without any such context. Piecing together the evidence and producing some sort of guidance as to the text's origins are rarely easy tasks. In the interests of completeness, mention should be made of the somewhat cynical approach to the Geniza texts of some scholars, albeit if it seems today to be a somewhat exotic view. Steinschneider referred somewhat derisively to "fragmentarische Gelehrter" ("fragmentary specialists") and Judah David Eisenstein (1907–1913) claimed that "such fragments may have been consigned to the Genizah precisely because they were unreliable and inaccurate" and that "Genizah research appears to have produced no valuable results."

Although 40,000 pieces of medieval Hebrew poetry were known before the Geniza discoveries, that source has now increased the number to some 100,000. The work of the earliest

(2011); and Cole and Hoffman (2011). Some of the comments here are borrowed from Reif (2021).

Hebrew poets in the Jewish homeland is now better understood and has been critically compared with the considerably dissimilar genres of other major centres, such as Babylonia, North Africa, Italy, and Spain. Improved studies have been written not only of the poetry of prolific individuals, but also of the overall linguistic and literary developments that can be detected within these many verses. Scientific understanding of the standard rabbinic prayers has also improved immeasurably, with a welter of data about the clashes between the Palestinian and Babylonian rites, about their detailed contents, and about the way in which the Mesopotamian religious authorities successfully and widely laid down liturgical law. There has been a realisation that once such a standardisation had been effected, it was soon followed by a diversification into local rites that once again provided the opportunity for innovation and variation. The repertoire of prayers, hymns, and benedictions available to early medieval Jewish communities is now seen to have been much wider than hitherto supposed, and it is proving possible to explain liturgical adjustment in social, political, and historical terms, as well as from theological angles.

4.0. Zunz's Influence

Such interest in locating and examining every scrap of manuscript text and in setting each of them in some sort of historical, literary, and linguistic context undoubtedly owes much to the pioneering efforts of Zunz. Also inspired by him is the concern to see Judaism not just as a set of religious laws and talmudic texts, but also more broadly as a total civilisation. The kind of mastery

of philology and bibliography which Zunz promoted and in which he excelled had become second nature to much of Jewish scholarship in the period leading up to the Geniza discoveries. Liturgy for the great champion of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* was not simply what the eastern European Jews referred to as *davenen*, but was also a source for the better understanding of Jewish history, spirituality, and total culture, and this precedent was followed by the scholars of the Geniza period. The history and characteristics of each of the rites that had occupied Zunz were also of interest to his scholarly successors. His initiative in treating Jewish liturgical poetry as impressive literature worthy of close attention set the tone for the intensive and extensive efforts of Geniza scholars in that area of study. Interestingly, it was not until recent decades that the statutory prayers began to receive even a semblance of equal attention from critical scholarship.

An examination of the work of specialists in Jewish prayer in the first three decades after the Geniza discoveries, where the impact of those remarkable finds may be said to be at its most decisive, does, however, reveal a set of nuances that undoubtedly differ from those that were operative in Zunz's research and outlook. While it is incontestable that such leading academic figures as Solomon Schechter, Ismar Elbogen, Jacob Mann, and Louis Finkelstein were disciples of Zunz, in that they also examined the texts of the Geniza manuscripts and the early editions, they had before them a welter of evidence about the liturgical traditions of the Jewish communities in the Islamic world that was simply not available before the 1890s (see Reif 2016; 2023). As a result,

they could focus more precisely on the differences between Babylonia and the land of Israel and build a broader picture of the development of medieval Jewish worship. Schechter was especially interested in the history of Jewish spirituality, while Mann traced the manner in which change was achieved and expressed in the totality of Jewish worship. Elbogen and Finkelstein also had fresh forms of *tendenz* and their own motivations in the reconstruction of Jewish liturgical history. The former was devoted to contemporary religious ideas and practice that were to the left of the theological centre, while the latter was enthused by modern theories of social and political history. If the anti-Jewish ideologies of Zunz's time were expressed in a rejection of the Jews as a cultured nation and inspired his ambitions to prove them wrong, the antisemitism of the early twentieth century was a virus that had developed new mutations. Racist theory and resentment of immigrants were not bigotries that could elicit an effective response on the part of Jewish liturgical historians. The growing presence of Jews—even religiously committed Jews—in the university world, in general, and in the oriental and theological faculties, in particular, was under way, even if it took decades to see the kind of posts in Jewish studies for which Zunz longed (part of the process is described in Band 1966).

It is not without significance that Geniza research involved debate and even sometimes co-operation between Jews and non-Jews. Of course, the decipherment and understanding of many of the Geniza texts demanded deep knowledge not only of Jewish liturgy, but also of the talmudic, midrashic, and halakhic sources, and these were not areas in which many non-Jews excelled. At

the same time, topics such as Bible, Targum, palimpsests, and works such as Ben Sira and the Damascus Document, attracted a number of non-Jewish scholars, not the least important of whom were such names as Paul Kahle, Francis Burkitt, Charles Taylor, Arthur Cowley, and Rudolf Smend (Reif 2000, 20–21, 65, 67, 69, 83, 89–90, 97, 118, 238, 240–41, 244–45, 247, 255, 257–58; 2009; 2018). That said, David Samuel Margoliouth, from a family of converts to Christianity, could reject the Geniza evidence (stubbornly until his death in 1940) as “almost always valueless” and express the view that the testimony of Rabbinic Judaism (indeed the “whole rabbinic farrago”) was of little consequence and “Old-Hebrew and the old-Israel” were theologically dead and buried (see Margoliouth 1890; 1913). Given that by the 1930s many Jews were fleeing Germany, Zunz’s concern with providing the German Jews with a liturgical history of which they could be proud had by then become irrelevant and would later be replaced by those who sought the national element or, if you will, a kind of proto-Zionism, in Jewish literary sources. Schechter went some way towards rehabilitating some aspects of Jewish mysticism (Reif 2016, 50–51), but serious study of the whole topic, in Geniza texts and in other early material, would have to await the devoted efforts of Gershom Scholem in later decades, which are not relevant to our present treatment.

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NEW GENIZA FRAGMENTS FROM THE COMMENTARY OF R. ISAAC B. SAMUEL AL-KANZĪ THE SEPHARDI ON JOSHUA AND JUDGES

Aharon Maman^{*}

R. Isaac ben Samuel the Sephardi, aka al-Kanzī (b. 1050, Andalusia, d. 1130, Fustat), composed a commentary on the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings).¹ Most of this work is considered lost and only a small part of it has been discovered in the Cairo Geniza and published. The remains of his commentary on 1 Samuel are included in MSS RNL Evr.-Arab. I 3362,² RNL Evr.-Arab. II 991.266, and RNL Evr.-Arab. II 3061.10. His commentary on 2 Samuel appears in MS BL Or. 2388³ and has been prepared for publication by the late Shimon Shtober. A relic

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¹ On R. Isaac ben Shmuel the Sephardi's life and work, see Margoliouth (1898); Simon (1983; 2000); Shtober (1996); Schlossberg (2008); Maman (2020).

² For a description of this manuscript, see Basal (2001, 69–72).

³ It is from the same copy of the commentary on 1 Samuel.

from the commentary on Judges appears in CUL T-S AS 173.64 verso and was published by Shraga Abramson (1979, 260–64).

In this article, two excerpts from R. Isaac's commentary on Joshua⁴ and the rest of the relic from his commentary on Judges that Abramson did not publish are published for the first time. The relic that Abramson published is republished here with some corrections (1979, 260–64).

The two passages from the commentary on Joshua are from a different copy. The attribution of the passages to R. Isaac al-Kanzī is supported by two references to Ḥayyūj's *Kitāb al-Nutaf*, opening with the formula *qāla Abū Zakariyya Yahya...* 'Ḥayyūj said', which is a clear characteristic of R. Isaac's style when he quotes from that source (Basal 2001, 70–71). Another salient feature of R. Isaac's commentary is, though Rabbanite, his references to the tenth century famous Karaite commentator Yefet ben 'Eli.

A large part of the passage from Joshua contains toponyms. Other commentators leave those toponyms as they are in the Hebrew original or transliterate them when necessary, but do not bother to 'translate' or identify them as place names used in contemporary geography. As may be seen in the text below, R. Isaac took a different direction. He expended great effort to explain those toponyms based on etymological analysis. For instance, he gave no fewer than four different explanations for the name וִפְנִי "Ophni" (Josh. 18.24), two of them based on internal comparison to other Hebrew nouns, one based on Arabic, and one on Aramaic etymology:

⁴ R. Isaac twice mentions his commentary on Joshua in his commentary on 1 Samuel. See Basal (2001, 71).

1. The place is named after a certain person “Ophni”, based on the similarity to חֲפְנִי ‘Ḥofni’ (1 Sam. 1.3), probably assuming an interchange of /ḥ/ and /ʿ/.
2. The toponym is related to an Arabic proper name “Affān”, similar to the ‘tomb of ‘Affān’,⁵ known from Egyptian Arabic from the time of R. Isaac. This is an amazing comparison, but it is not unusual.⁶
3. It may mean ‘doubled’, because כָּפּוּל (e.g., Exod. 28.16) is rendered עִי ‘doubled’ in Aramaic (Targum Onqelos), meaning it was a duplicated place, like מְעַרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה ‘the cave of Machpelah’ (i.e., Cave of the Patriarchs; Gen. 23.9), explained in b. ‘Eruvin 53a as referring to the patriarchs buried there in *pairs*, e.g., Abraham and Sarah, etc., or, alternatively, because it contained *two* separate places.
4. The toponym may be related to Heb. עוֹף ‘bird’ (Lev. 17.13), assuming that the gate of that city had a bird drawn on it.

This is a bold, original, and exhaustive etymological analysis, in which no possible sound similarity escapes the commentator’s mind. Yet, he neither decided between the four options nor gave preference to any of them, but laid out the data for the reader to make his own decision. This is characteristic of R. Isaac’s rational

⁵ This data is not recorded elsewhere. The most famous ‘Affān is the father of Othman, the third Caliph after the death of Mohammad.

⁶ Compare, e.g., Rav Hai Gaon’s comparison of Heb. אֶזֶן (Deut. 23.14) to Arab. ‘āzin ‘kind of a weapon’, itself based on metonymy with the name of an Arab tribe who used that weapon. See Maman (2000, 375).

exegesis, hence the importance of the publication of his commentary.

1.0. The Manuscripts

T-S Ar. 23.1 includes two non-consecutive folios in semi-cursive oriental script. Each page has 21–23 lines, with a few small holes. Some Judaeo-Arabic words are vocalised with Arabic vowel signs. Biblical lemmas are marked with a raised colon. There are some addenda and one deletion. In two places the Arabic word *naṣṣ* ‘Scripture, text’ appears in the right-hand margin to mark al-Kanzī’s translation of a bulk of verses. In the Baker and Polliack catalogue (2001, 111), the passage is described as a translation and interpretation of Josh. 5.2–6, without identifying the author.

ENA 2918.30–31 includes two consecutive folios in oriental semi-cursive script, with a few small holes, partial Arabic vocalisation, and a colon above the biblical lemmas. Each page has 22–23 lines.

T-S AS 173.64 + T-S AS 139.35 are parts of the same folio. The recto of this folio is beyond the scope of this discussion, but rather includes the Halachic code of R. Isaac Alfāsī (ha-Rif) on b. Bava Qamma 71b. The verso contains a relic from al-Kanzī’s commentary on Judges. The script is oriental semi-cursive. Some of the content is missing due to lacunae, and some has faded. The text has partial Tiberian and Arabic vocalisation. The number of surviving lines is 24.

2.0. The Text

2.1. Commentary on Josh. 5.2 (fol. 1) and 5.15–6.3 (fol. 2): T-S Ar. 23.1

fol. 1 recto

מערב עד בקר. או יומים או חדש או ימים וג'
 ובהאריך הענן על המשכן ימים רבים וג'
 פכאנו כל וקת מְתֹאֲהָבִין ללרחיל. ואמא
 צפורה לם לם תְּעֹדֵר פי ספרהא כמא אֲעֹדֵרו
 5 קום מוסי. פנקול לאן אמר צפורה כאן פי
 יד נפסהא אן שאת סארת תלך אלפראסך אלי
 בית אביהא ואן שאת אקאמת ולדלך לם תְּעֹדֵר
 כמא לם יְעֹדֵר אלוואחד מן אלאמָה אלאן פי ספרה
 אד אמרה אלי נפסה. ואמא קום מוסי פלם יכון
 10 אמרהם אלי נפוסהם. ואנמא יתצרפון חית
 יצרפהם רבהם באלענן כ"ק ולפי העלות הענן
 מעל האהל ואחרי כן יסעו בני ישראל ובמקום
 אשר ישכן שם הענן שם יחנו בני ישראל.
 אלי הָנָא כלאמה ז"ל. וקאל אבו זכריא יחיי קולה
 15 ושוב שנית קאל פיהמא אן יהושע כאן קד תולָא
 אלקיאם בהדא אלאמר במצר עלי ידי משה על'
 אלס' ולם יחתאג אלי דכר דלך ולא אלי תדוינה.
 כמא אן פי אלמקרא מא תסתדל עלי אולָה
 באכרה ועלי אכרה באולָה. מתל קולה שאול
 20 שאל האיש לנו ולמולדתנ[ו] וג' ותקרבון אלי
 כלכם וג' ויקח יתרו חותן משה את צפרה וג'
 ולם ידכר ארסאלהא. וכדלך היטיבו אשר דברו.
 נביא אקים להם וג'. ומתל דלך כתיר. וכדלך

fol. 1 verso

האהנא קו' ושוב מול את בני ישראל שנית. דליל
 עלי אנה קד כאן קיִים באמר אלכתאן קבל הדא

לינט'ר מן יחכם אלצנאעה ויסתעמל כתרֶה אל
 סכאכין וכתרֶה אלכתאנין לאן אלקום כתירין.
 5 ואסנאד אלכתאנה לה לקיאמה באלאמר. הו מתל
 קולה בככר הירדן יצקם המלך. פאסנד סבך
 נחאס אלעמודים אלי אלמלך לקיאמה באלאמר.
 וקיל פי קולה שנית אנה ליס יתעלֶך באל
 מילה ואנמא יתעלֶך בקו' ושוב. ויריד אן אללה
 10 כאן קד כאטב יהושע פי דלֶך אליום מֶדה פי
 אמר אלמילה ולם ידכר דלֶך תם. תם עאד
 כאטבה תאניה פי אמר אלמילה עלי טריק אל
 תאכיד. כמא אכֶד פי קולה שוב ואמרת אל
 חזקיהו נגיד עמי וג' ותקדיר אלקול ושוב
 15 שנית אמרֶהם באלמילה. פקולה שנית
 הו עאיד אלי ושוב לא אלי מול. ויעני ארֶגע פי
 הדא אליום אליהם תאניה ואשרע פי אלמילה.
 וקד יכון שנית [ל]מא אמר בה אברהם לאן
 אלכתאב קד אכבר באלעלה פי קו' וזה הדבר
 20 אשר מל יהושע. כי ארבעים שנה הלכו וג'
 ואורא אלעֶדֶר בקו' כי לא מלו אותם בדרך.
 [...]

fol. 2 recto

ואקף עליה קדוס הו פצנע יהושע כדאך.
 סמאה אלמֶדוֹן שר צבא יי כ"ק הו ען נפסה.⁷
 וקאל לה של נעלך. אמרה בדלֶך מן גהה קדוסייה
 אלמוצֶע וכ"ק⁸ קדש הוא. לחלול אלמלאך פיה.⁹

⁷ This is Yefet's wording in his interpretation *sub loc.*, as it appears in MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 19 verso.

⁸ The י seems to be superfluous.

⁹ The wording is much the same as in Yefet's commentary, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 19 verso, with slight differences, as follows:
 ...ואלזמה אן יקלע נעלה... בקו'... ודלֶך...

5 ומעני אלקדוסיה ענדי מעני אלכצוצ'ה ואלנזאהה
 ואלס'מ' ואלתסאני. פהי פי אלכאלק תעא' תכצ'ן
 ותנז'ה ען כונה גסם או ערץ. וס'מ' ותסאני מן
 אן י'דרך בחאסה אלבצר ומא שאכל ד'לך. והי
 פי אלמלאיכה כונהם מ'נז'הין ען אן ילחקהם ערץ
 10 מן אעראץ אלבשר מתל אלמות וגירה והי פי
 אלבשר תנזיההם ען אלדנס ואלכטא מתל אלאנביא
 ואלאוליא פמעני אלתנז'ה אחק במעני קדוש מן
 גיר ד'לך מן אלמעאני לאנה מעני גאמע. ושל. הו
 מתל של תשלו לה. והו מן דואת אלמתלין ומענאה
 15 אלסל ואלאנסלאל. ויריחו.¹⁰ ויריחא גאלקה
 ומ'גלקה מן קבל בני אסרא' לא כארג ולא דאכל.
 קו' סגרת הו מן פעל אהל יריחא א'
 אנהא גאלקה ומ'גלקה עלי אהלהא וקד שרחה
 בקו' אין יוצא א' לים יכל'ו אחד יכרג מנהא
 20 לאלא יסתאמן לישראל. וקו' ומס<ו>גרת.¹¹ הו מן
 פעל ישר' באלתצייק עליהם אי מ'גלקה ען מן
 הו כארג ענהא מן אהלהא. וקד שרחה בקו'
 ואין בא. אי לים יכל'ו אחד מן אהלהא ידכ'ל אליהא.

fol. 2 verso

קאל אבו זכריא יחיי סוגרת פועלה אי מאנעה מן
 אלדכול אליהא. ומסו<ו>גרת.¹² פעל לם יסם פאעלה. והו
 מ'בני מן אלבניה אלתקילה. מפעלת עלי וזן מש<ו>ברת.¹³
 אי מ'גלקה מאנעה אלכרוג וממנועה מן אלדכול.
 ויאמר יי'.¹⁴ קאל אללה ליהושע.
 אנט'ר אסלמת בידך יריחא ומלכהא מע גבאברה

¹⁰ The right margin glosses נגן.¹¹ Completed between the lines.¹² Completed between the lines.¹³ Completed between the lines.¹⁴ The right margin glosses נגן.

אלאיד ואלקוֹוה. קיל אן הדא אלכטאב ורד אליה
עלי יד מלאך. וקיל עלי יד אלעזר הכהן באורים
ותומים. בקו' ולפני אלעזר הכהן יעמד ושאל
לו במשפט האורים לפני יי' וג' וקסם אהל
יריחא ג' אקסאם. אלעואם ואלנסא ואלאטפאל.
צם אלכל פי קולה את יריחו¹⁵ מע נפס אלבלד.
ואלתאני אלמלך. ואלג¹⁶ גבורי החיל. וסבותם.
ותדורו אלמדינה כל רגאל אלחרב אחדאק תחדקו
באלמדינה מרֶה ואחדה כדאך תפעל ו' איאם.
ושבעה. וז' אימֶה יחמלו אבואק אלגלב
קדאם אלצנדוק ופי אליום אלסאבע תדורו אל
מדינה ז' מראת ואלאימֶה יצֶרבו באלאבואק.
והיה. פיכון ענד מד אלצארב בקרן
אלגלב ענד סמאעכם צות אלסאפור יגֶלבו כֹּל
אלקום גלבה עטימה פתקע סור אלמדינה
מכאנהא ויצעד אלקום כֹּל ואחד חדאה.
ערֶפה אנה יפתח אלבלד כמא¹⁷ יפעלו¹⁸

¹⁵ The wording is much the same as Yefet's in his commentary, according to the mentioned MS *ibid.*, with slight differences as follows: עלי ת'לאת'ה. פמנהם...בקולה...

¹⁶ Yefet, *ibid.* reads 'ואלת'אלת'.

¹⁷ According to Yefet, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 20, it should be corrected to במא.

¹⁸ The wording is much the same as Yefet's, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 20, with slight differences as follows: ערֶף... יפעלוה.

2.2. Judaeo-Arabic Translation of Josh. 18.15–28 and Commentary on 18.11–24: ENA 2918.30–31

fol. 30 recto

שעארי וכרג אלתכם גרברא וכרג אלי אלמעין [מ]א
אלד[י] אנפתח. וירד. ונזל אלתכם אלי טרף אלגבל
אלדי בחצרה וא[ד] אבן צאחב אלהודג¹⁹ אלי גאנב
אלקביל אלי[בוס]ין קבלה ונזל אלי עין רגל. ותאר
ורסם מן אלשמאל וכרג עין שמס וכרג אלי אל 5
אגואר אלתי מ'קאבל עקבה אלחמרא ונזל אלי
מקטע אלחגר אלענאם אלדי לבן ראובן. ועבר.
וגאז אלי גאנב חדא אלסבכה שמאלא ונזל אלי
אלבידאה. ועבר. וגאז אלתכם אלי גהה
10 מנזל אלחגלה שמאלא וכאן מכרג אלתכם אלי לסאן
בחר אלמאלח שמאלא אלי טרף אלארדן קבלה הדא
תכם אלקבלה. והירדן ואלארדן יציר
תכמה לגהה אלשרק הזה נחלה בני בנימין
לתכומהא דאירא לעשאירהם. והיו. פכאנו
15 אלקרי לסבט בני בנימין לעשאירהם יריחא
ומנזל אלחגלה ומרג קטע. ובית הערבה.
ומנזל אלסבכה וקריה אלצוף ובית אל ואל
מעוגין ואלמתמרה ואלגזלה. וכפר. וכפר
אלעמאנין ואלמצאעף ויגוז ואלדי עלי באבה
20 צורה טאיר ואלקלע [י]"ב קריה וארבאצהא.
גבעון. אלמעקל ואלראמה ואביאר. והמצפה.
ואלמץ ואלצראגמה ואלמצאעה. ורקס.

¹⁹ The copyist skipped אלגבל (Josh. 18.16) in his translation, probably due to homoeoteleuton.

fol. 30 verso

ו[]ל אלקם ומוצע אלטב ודאת אלמנטר.
 וצלע. ואלרושן ודאת אלאף ואלדאס הי
 ארוסלם ואלקלעה ואלקריה י"ד [קר]יה
 וארבאצהא. זאת. הדה נחלה בני בנימין
 5 לעשאירהם. ערף אנה וקע גורל בנימין
 בין גורל²⁰ ובין גורל יוסף. תם קאל ויהי להם
 הגבול וג' קולה לפאת צפונה יריד בה
 צפון לירדן אד אלירדן פי מזרח. פאורא אן
 גבול בנימין מלאצק גבול אפרים מן נאחיה
 10 צפון ויתצל בגבול יהודה מן נאחיה נגב.
 תם אכד ידכר חדוד בלדה פדכר בית אל
 ובית חורון. והו אול נחלת אפרים. תם דכר
 מן נאחיה²¹ אלאכרי קרית יערים. תם אנה
 אכד ידכר גהה נגב פדכר פיהא מואצע
 15 כתירה אלי אן וצל אלי לשון ים המלח אלדי הו אול
 עמל יהודה והי מתצלה באלירדן. תם בעד²²
 דכר אלחדוד דכר²³ אלכבאר אלתי הי אכר כ'טתה
 ודכר לה י"ב מפרדה וי"ד מפרדה. ואעלם
 אן צלע אסם מוצע והאלף אסם מוצע.
 20 ואלדליל עלי אן צלע אסם מוצע במפרדה
 קולה בצלע בארץ בנימין²⁴ פקד דל <[ע]ל[י]>²⁵ אן
 צלע אסם מוצע בדאתה. וכדלך גבעת

²⁰ Add יהודה.

²¹ It should be אלנאחיה.

²² Add אן.

²³ Add אלמדן according to Yefet, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 65 recto.

²⁴ It should be בצלע בארץ בנימין.

²⁵ Completed between the lines.

fol. 31 recto

אסם מוצע . קרית אסם מוצע . לאן [אן] לם
 נ[ע]ד הדה ד מ'דן לם יכרג עדדהא י"ד אולהא
 גבעון והרמה.²⁶ אעלם אן מ'עטם אסמא
 אלצ'אע אלתי פי הדא אלפצל קד פסרנאהא
 5 פי מא מצא. והי מן בית אָון אלי יריחו ובית
 חגלה. ועמק קציץ. אמא אן יכון אסם שכץ
 ואלעמק מנסוב אליה. או יכון מן מעני אל
 קטע אי מרג מקטוע כאן מרג ואחד ואנקטע
 עלי קטעתין אמא בנהר או בוהדה עלי ראי
 10 והגאי ביניו ובין העי. וצמרים. יגוז אן
 תכון אנגאם הדא אלבלד צופהא כתיר אכתר
 מן גירהא פאסמי צמרים. ואכרג בלפט
 אלתתניה ליורי אן צוף כל ראס מן גנם צמרים
 צעף מא יכרגה כל ראס מן גנם בלד אכר.
 15 ויגוז פיה וגה אכר אגרר מן הדא. והו אן
 אלחמא ואלדפא יסמא בלגה אלחכמים צמר
 קאלו בפרק מקום שנהגו פי פצל מוש[י] בין
 שובכין וכול' ען אלדגאגה אלגאלסה עלי אל
 ביץ משום דאכתי לא פרח צמרה מינה.
 20 [] בה [] א []
 הבצים . וקאלו פי בבא קמא פי פרק הכונס
 צאן [ל]דיר ר' זירא אמ' דצמרה צמורי.

²⁶ The content from ערף to והרמה is almost identical to Yefet's, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 65 recto, with slight differences as follows: ערף אן... קולה ויהי להם הגבול לפאת... דכר אלנאחיה... אלדי הי... וקרית... לאנה אן... אלד' מדן... וכדאך קאל בארץ... מוצע בראסה

fol. 31 verso

[] [חַימָמָה חֲמוּמִי. וּמִן הָדָא אֲסָמִית אֶלְחָמָא
 אֶלְצָאֵלְבָה אִישְׁתָּא צִמְרִיתָא. פִּיגּוּז אֵן יִכְ[ו]ן
 הוּי אֶלְבֵּלְד חֲאָמִי וּלְאָגֵל חֲמָאִיאַת אֶלְנָאס.
 וְהֶפְרָה. מִן פֶּרָה וּרְבָה. פִּכָּאֵן הָדָא אֶלְגָּנֵס
 5 אֶעֱנִי גָנֵס אֶלְפָּרִיס וְאֶלְפָּרוֹת לֵהֶם פִּי הָדָא אֶלְבֵּלְד
 נִמּוֹ וּכְתָרָה וְאֶתְמָאֵר אֶכְתָּר מִן גִּירָהָא מִן
 אֶלְבֵּלְאֵד אוּ יִכּוֹן שְׁגֵר הָדָא אֶלְמוּצֵעַ וְאֶתְמָאֵרָה
 פִּי אֶלְנִמּוֹ וְאֶלְכֶצֶב וְאֶלְטִלוּעַ אֶכְתָּר מִן מוּאֲצֵעַ
 אֶכְרִי. קָאֵל צֶאֱחָב אֶלְאֲצוּל פִּי בָאֵב פ'ר'ה'. וְלִם
 10 יִפְצֵל אֲבוּ זִכְרִיאַ בִּין פֶּרָה וּרְבָה.²⁷ וּבִין פּוֹרָה
 רָאֵשׁ. אֶלְדִּי מַעֲנָאָה אֶלְנִבָּאֵת וְאֶלְטִלוּעַ. וּמִנָּה
 אֶשְׁתֵּק בֵּן פּוֹרֵת יוֹסֵף בֵּן פּוֹרֵת עֲלֵי עֵין וּג'
 וְתֹאֲרִכְנָה פֹאֲרֵתִיו. וְעֶפְרָה. צִיעָה חֲסִנָּה
 מִלִּיחָה כֹּאֲנָהָא גִזְאֵלָה. וּכְפָר הַעֲמוּנָה. כְּפָר
 15 מִנְסוּב אֵלֵי עֲמוּן וְהִי כְּתִיב בְּאֵלִיא. וְהַעֲמוּנִי.
 לֹאֵן חֲרוּף אֶלְלִין תְּבַתְּדֵל. וְהֶעֱפִנִי. הָדָא
 מִכָּאֵן יִגּוּז אֵן יִכּוֹן מִנְסוּב אֵלֵי שִׁכְץ אִסְמָה
 עֲפִנִי. כִּמָּא יִסְמָא חֶפְנִי. אוּ יִכּוֹן אִסְמָה
 בִּלְגָה אֶלְעָרֵב עֲפָאֵן כִּמָּא יִקָּאֵל בְּמִצָּר תִּרְבָּה
 20 עֲפָאֵן. וִיגּוּז אֵן יִפְסֹר וְאֶלְמִצָּעָף. לֹאֵן תִּרְגּוּם
 כְּפּוֹל עֵיף. פִּיכּוֹן מוּצֵעַ מִתְצָאֵעַף עֲלֵי רָאִי
 מַעֲרֵת הַמִּכְפָּלָה. אוּ [יִכּוֹן] טֹאִיר מִצּוֹ[ר] עֲלֵי
 בָאֵב דִּלְךְ אֶלְמוּצֵעַ. מִן ע[ו]ף. וְאֶלְנִון וְאֵלִיא זֹאִידָאֵן.

²⁷ According to Ibn Janāḥ (ed. Neubauer 1875, 585, פר"ה), one should add אֶלְדִּי מַעֲנָאָה נִמּוֹ וּכְתָרָה.

2.3. Commentary on Judg. 9.8–15: T-S AS 173.64

verso

כאן²⁸ יותם רגלא פאצלא²⁹ פי אלדין ואלעקל וחכים פי תאליף אלקול פצ[רב] [מתל עלי מא גרי³⁰ פקאל הלוד הלכו העצים וג' אלי ויאמרו לזית מלכ[ה] עלינו הכדי הו³¹ קארי והו כתיב מלוכה עלינו וכדלך קולה בעד[ה]³² לבי את מלכי עלינו הו כתיב מלוכי עלינו קאל אבו זכרי³³ יחיי מלכ[ה]³⁴ עלינו מלכי עלינו תכתב מלוכה³⁵ מלוכי עלי אצלה[מ]א לאן אלואו אל[תי] 5 פיהמא הי אלואו בעינהא אלתי פי מלוד ומא גא עלי לפט מלוד[ה] ו] אלאצל ואנ[מא] [תח]דף³⁶ ללאסתכפאף פמן קא[ל] מלוכה מ[ל]כי פ[על]י³⁷ אצלה ומן קאל מלכ[ה] מלכי פעלי אלאסתכפ[אף] [פ]געל³⁸ אחדהמא מקרו ואלאכר מכתוב לאלא יסקט שיא מן אלגאיז אשאר 10 בקולה הלוד הלכו העצים אלי אלקום אלדין אגתמעו אלי גדעון וקאלו לה משל בנו גם אתה גם בנד גם ב[ני]³⁹ בנד פאגאבהם לא אמשול אני בכם ולא ימשל בני בכם יי ימשל בכם⁴⁰ ותמתיל[ה]

²⁸ Abramson (1976, 263): באן.

²⁹ Abramson (1976, 263): פצלאן.

³⁰ The wording is much similar to Yefet's in MS RNL II Evr.-arab. I 4246, fol. 4 recto: יתם רגלא פאצלא עאקלא חכימא פי תאליף אלקול וצרב מתל עלי גמלה מא גרי.

³¹ Abramson (1976, 263): הוא.

³² Abramson (1976, 263): בעד.

³³ Should be זכריא.

³⁴ Abramson (1976, 263) and Basal (2001, 89): מלכי.

³⁵ Abramson (1976, 263) and Basal (2001, 89): מלוכי.

³⁶ Basal (2001, 89): [סקט].

³⁷ Abramson (1976, 263): בלפט; Basal (2001, 89): [פהו].

³⁸ Abramson (1976, 263) and Basal (2001, 89): וגעל.

³⁹ Should be בן.

⁴⁰ The wording is identical to Yefet's, except for the foreword פקולה הלוד הלכו העצים ישיר אלי...

ישראל באלעצים לאנה הכדי קאל פי יחזקאל הנה אני לוקח
 את עץ יוסף אשר ביד אפרים [ושבטי] ישראל חבריו ונתתי
 15 אותם עליו א[ת] עץ י[הודה] ל[אבוה]
 []

2.4. T-S AS 139.35 verso

אשגאר נפיסה ובהא []
 באלשוך אלמודי ומת'ל [אהל שכם ובית מלוא בארוז אללבנאן]⁴¹
 לקותהם ועטם שאנהם []
 20 ללעטם הַחֲדָלְתִּי את דש[ני]
 הַחֲדָלְתִּי בקמצות אלהא ו[]
 מן אלהא אלי אלחא וגעלו אל[]
 הא אלתמיחה⁴² והי אלבניה אל[]
 []

3.0. English Translation

3.1. Commentary on Josh. 5.2 (fol. 1) and 5.15–6.3 (fol. 2): T-S Ar. 23.1

fol. 1 recto

או יומים⁴³ 'from evening to morning' (Num. 9.21),⁴⁴ מערב עד בקר
 'whether it were two days or a month or a year' etc. (v. 22), 'and when the cloud
 tarried upon the tabernacle many days' etc. (v. 19)—they were

⁴¹ Completed according to Yefet, MS RNL II Evr.-Arab. I 4246, fol. 4 recto.

⁴² Should be אלתמיהה.

⁴³ The verse opens with ויש אשר יהיה הענן.

⁴⁴ All English glosses of biblical passages are from the KJV.

ready to travel at any time. As to Zipporah—why did her journey not justify the postponing of her son's circumcision, just as the journey of the children of Israel justified the postponing of their circumcision?

We will answer this: because her decision depended on her will: if she wanted, she went to her father's house, and if she wanted otherwise, she would stay. Therefore, her journey did not justify the postponing of her son's circumcision, as much as today no one in the nation can justify the postponement of the circumcision just because of his journey, because one's decision depends on one's will. As to the children of Israel—their movement did not depend upon their own will, but rather they travelled to where God guided them by means of the cloud, as Scripture says: ולפי העלות הענן מעל האהל ואחרי כן יסעו בני ישראל ובמקום אשר ישכן שם 'when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel encamped' (v. 17). Here ends the quote from his words, let his memory be of a blessing.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ These are Sa'adya's words in his commentary on Gen. 17. Some of the commentary on this chapter is included in the Geniza fragment NY ENA.2674.14–15. The following is the wording of the above fragment, fol. 15, whose beginning is missing because of a tear at the bottom of the leaf. The textual variations in comparison with R. Isaac's commentary are highlighted.

[fol. 15 recto] מקאמהם פי מו<א>ע מדדא טוילה... ואקא[מו] פי רקים מדה טוילה

[fol. 15 verso] פאנהם כאנו פי כל יום וסאעה וטרפה מסתעדין ללרחיל אד' רחילהם

כאן בארתפאע אלענן פאד'א ארתפע (רחלו) פהו קול אללה להם קומו וארחלו ואמא

Abū Zakariā Yahyā (Yehuda Ḥayyūj) said: “The word of Scripture **ושוב מל את בני ישראל שנית** ‘circumcise again the children of Israel a second time’ (Josh. 5.2) means that Moses, peace be upon him, imposed on Joshua in Egypt to be responsible for this matter, and there was no need to mention it nor to write it again.”⁴⁶

As there are matters in the Bible, whose beginning one may deduce from their end and vice versa, as the Scripture says: **שאל** ‘The man asked straitly concerning ourselves and our kindred’ etc. (Gen. 43.7); **ותקרבון אלי כלכם וג’** ‘And ye came near unto me every one of you’ etc. (Deut. 1.22); **ויקח** ‘And Jethro, Moses’s father-in-law, took Zipporah’ etc. [‘Moses’s wife after he had sent her away’] (Exod. 18.2), for he had not mentioned her sending before; as well as **היטיבו אשר דברו נביא אקים להם וג’** ‘They have well said that which

צפורה לם לם תעד'ר פי ספרהא כמא **עד'ר** קום מוסי **פלאן כאן אמרהא** פי **ידהא** אן שאת סארת ואן שאת אקאמת

‘their stay in some places for long periods of time... and they stayed in Reqem for a long time. They were ready for the journey every day, at every hour and at every moment because their journey was up to the ascension of the cloud; in its ascension they travelled. This is the saying of God to them: “Arise and ride” (Deut. 2.24). Now Zipporah, why did her journey not justify the delay of her son’s circumcision, just as the journey of the children of Israel justified the postponement of their circumcision? For her matter depended on her: if she wanted, she went, and if she wanted, she stayed.’

⁴⁶ The adaptation of Ḥayyūj’s commentary on **שנית** is recorded in ‘Ali ben Sulayman’s Compendium to *Kitāb al-Nutaf*. See Maman and Ben-Porat (2012, 124).

they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet' etc. (Deut. 18.17–18) and many like them. And

fol. 1 verso

his saying here 'circumcise again the children of Israel the second time' is a proof that he was given responsibility for the circumcision earlier, [among other things] to check who was proficient in this craft and to use many knives and many circumcisers, because the people were many. The attribution of the circumcision to him—as he was responsible for it—is similar to what it is said in *המלך יצקם הירדן* 'in the plain of the Jordan did the king cast them' (1 Kgs 7.46). Scripture attributed the casting of the copper of the pillars to the king, because he was responsible for it.

Some say that *שנית* 'a second time' is related not to the circumcision, but to his saying *ושוב* '[circumcise] again', meaning that God had already spoken to Joshua that day for some time about the circumcision, without it being mentioned by Scripture. Then he spoke to him again on this matter for emphasis, as he emphasised in his saying *שוב ואמרת אל חזקיהו נגיד עמי וג'* 'Return and say to Hezekiah the prince of My people' etc. (2 Kgs 20.5), the meaning of the verse being 'to command them again on the circumcision'. *שנית* 'a second time' refers to *ושוב* 'and again', not to *מל* 'circumcise!', meaning 'return to them again on this day and begin to circumcise them'.

It is possible that *שנית* 'a second time' refers to the commandment given to Abraham, because Scripture justified the circumcision by saying *מל יהושע* 'this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise' (Josh. 5.4), *כי ארבעים שנה הלכו וג'* 'for the

children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness' etc. (v. 6), justifying the matter by saying *בדרך מלו אותם* 'because they had not been circumcised while on the way' (v. 7) [...]

fol. 2 recto

[...] stand on it is holy, and Joshua did so.⁴⁷ The editor of the Bible called him *שר צבא ה'* 'captain of the LORD's host' (Josh. 5.15) according to his own words.⁴⁸ And he said to him: *של נעליך* 'put off thy shoe' (Josh. 5.15). He was commanded to do so because of the sanctity of the place, as it is written *קדש הוא* '[for the place whereon thou standest] is holy'. 'Holy is it' (Josh. 5.15), because an angel is in it.⁴⁹ The matter of holiness, in my opinion, is about being special, sublime, high, and exalted. As for the Creator, let Him be exalted—it (= the holiness) is a matter of being too special and sublime to be a physical essence or an accident, and of being too high and exalted to be attained via the sense of sight and so on. Regarding the angels—[the essence of sanctity is] that they are too sublime for a human accident to occur to them, such as death and the like. As for men—[holiness is] being exalted from impurity and sin like prophets and saints. The meaning of sublimity is most appropriate to 'sanctity' from among other meanings because it is all-encompassing.

⁴⁷ This is the end of a translation of Josh. 5.15.

⁴⁸ In v. 14.

⁴⁹ So explain Yefet, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, fol. 19 verso, and Qimḥi, Joshua (Josh. 5.14) in their commentaries on what made the place holy.

◦ של ‘put off’ is similar to של תָּשְׁלוּ לה ‘pull out some for her’ (Ruth 2.16). It (= the verb) is from the geminate roots, meaning ‘pull out’ and ‘be pulled out’.⁵⁰

○ ויריחו ‘Now Jericho’ (Josh. 6.1): now Jericho is closing and shut up because of the children of Israel; no one is going out and no one is coming in. The word סָגְרָה ‘closing’ is an act of the inhabitants of Jericho, that is, it closes on its inhabitants, clarified by the saying אִין יוצא ‘none went out’ (v. 1),⁵¹ that is, they do not allow anyone to leave it, so preventing them from seeking refuge in Israel. The statement וּמִסָּגְרָה ‘shut up’ (v. 1) is an act of Israel, who besieged it, that is, it is shut up for its inhabitants who came out of it, this being clarified in the saying ואִין בא ‘none came in’ (v. 1),⁵² that is, they did not allow its inhabitants to enter it.

⁵⁰ So also, Alfāsi (ed. Skoss, II:671, root ש"ל where he quotes של נעליך (Exod. 3.5); Menaḥem ben Saruq (ed. Sáenz-Badillos 1986, 363), derived של נעליך from ישל ויתך (Deut. 28.40). In the variants one may also find של תשלו לה; Sa'adya translates של נעליך 'remove your shoes'; Ibn Janāḥ (ed. Dérenbourg 1886, 261 [= *Riqma*, ed. Tene 1964, 277]) derives של נעליך from root נש"ל. So also did Ibn Ezra in his commentary *ad loc.* and Qimḥi (*Shorashim* 458). Qimḥi lists של תשלו לה under the root נש"ל and explains it: "They pulled out some heads of grain for her from the bundles" (*Shorashim*, 775).

⁵¹ So explains Yefet, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, 19 recto: 'קו' 'סגרת' יריד. 'סגרת' means closing its inhabitants, which is explained in his saying אין יוצא ['none is coming out'].

⁵² So explains Yefet, MS NY JTSLA MIE. 3361, 19 recto: יוקו 'ומסגרת' יעני: 'ומגלוקה למן הו כארג ענהא. וקד שרחה בקו' 'ואין בא' means closed for those outside of it, which he explained in his saying בא 'ואין בא' ['and none is coming in']'.

fol. 2 verso

Abū Zakariā Yaḥyā (Yehuda Ḥayyūj) says: סָגְרָת ‘closing’ [is in the morphological pattern of] *po‘elet*, that is, ‘prevents others from entering’ and מְסַגְרָת ‘shut up’ is a passive verb from the heavy conjugation *məfu‘elet*, like מְשׁוּבְרֶת *mešubberet* [‘broken’], that is, ‘shut up’, prevents both coming in and coming out.⁵³

◦ וַיֹּאמֶר ה' ‘and the LORD said’ (Josh. 6.2): the LORD said unto Joshua, “See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, even the mighty men of valour.” Some say that this speech was transmitted to him by an angel,⁵⁴ and it is said—by Eleazar the priest by means of the *’Urim we-Tumim* oracle, as it is said, “he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the *’Urim* before the LORD” etc. (Num. 27.21).⁵⁵

◦ He divided the inhabitants of Jericho into three parts: the multitude, the women, and the children, as it is written אֶת יְרִיחוֹ ‘[See, I have given into thy hand] Jericho’ (Josh. 6.2)—he included everyone with the city itself, the second part being “the king” and the third “the mighty men of valour.”⁵⁶

⁵³ A synopsis of Ḥayyūj’s explanation to סָגְרָת וּמְסַגְרָת ‘closing and shut up’ appears in ‘Ali Ben Sulayman’s compendium to *Kitāb al-Nutaf*. See Maman and Ben-Porat (2012, 124).

⁵⁴ So interprets Qimḥi in his commentary.

⁵⁵ This anonymous commentary uses the same language as Yefet’s commentary on the verse, MS MIE. 3361, fol. 19 verso.

⁵⁶ So explains Yefet, MS MIE. 3361, fol. 19 verso.

◦ וְסָבְתֶם 'ye shall compass' (v. 3): You shall go round about the city, all the men of war, round about the city once; so it shall be done six days.

◦ וּשְׁבַעַה 'and seven' (v. 4): Seven priests shall bear seven rams' horns before the ark; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the horns.

◦ וְהָיָה 'and it shall be' (v. 5): When the blower makes a long blast with the ram's horn and when you hear the sound of the horn, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall go up every man straight before him. He informed him that he will conquer the city thanks to what they will do.⁵⁷

3.2. Translation of Josh. 18.15–28 and Commentary on 18.11–24: ENA 2918.30–31

fol. 30 recto

◦ וְיָצָא הַגְּבוּל יָמָה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל מַעֵין מִי נְפִתּוֹחַ [the city of] Woods [Qiryat Ye'arim], and the border went out westward and went out to the Fountain-that-opened-up [Mei Nephtoah] (Josh. 18.15).

⁵⁷ The continuation of Yefet's commentary (MS MIE. 3361, fol. 20 recto) reads: והי תלתה אשיא יפעלוהא אנשי המלחמה אחדהא הו אנהם ידורון אלמדינה מן סאיר גהאיתהא ואלב' הו אן יחמלון אלכהנים אלארון וידורון בה ואלג' אן יצרבו באלבואק These are three things that will be done by the "men of war" (Josh. 6.3). First, they will surround the city on all sides; second, the priests shall carry the ark around; and third, the priests and others will blow the trumpets, as will be explained below.'

◦ וירד (v. 16): ‘the border went down to the uttermost part of the mountain that lieth before the Valley of the son of the Owner of Canopy [Gei ben Hinnom,⁵⁸ which is in the vale of Rephaim northward and it went down to the Valley of Hinnom], to the side of the Jebusites southward, and went down to the Man’s Fountain [‘Ein Rogel]’.

◦ וְתָאָר (v. 17): ‘it was drawn on the north and went out at Eye-of-the-Sun [‘Ein-shemesh] and went out to the valleys [Geli-loth] which are against the Red-Ascent⁵⁹ [Ma‘aleh Adummim] and it went down to the Stone’s passage of Bohan, son of Reuben.’

◦ ועבר (v. 18): ‘it passed along to the side over against the ‘Arabah northward and went down unto the ‘Arabah.’

◦ ועבר (v. 19): ‘the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward; and the goings out of the border were at the north bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan; this was the south border.’

◦ והירדן (v. 20): ‘the Jordan was to be the border of it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the borders thereof round about, according to their families.’

⁵⁸ It seems that al-Kanzī etymologically related הַיְנוּמָה to Rabbinic הינומה, bearing the same meaning, ‘canopy,’ as attested, e.g., y. Ketubbot 2.1, 9b: תמן נמנומה רבנן דהכא אמרין פיריומא. ‘in a *hinuma* (‘canopy’); there [in Babylon, it is called] *nimnuma* (‘bed’); the rabbis here [in Israel] call it *piryuma*’. פיריומא is assumed to be the Aramaic form of אפריון ‘canopy’ (Song 3.9), i.e., the same word with slight phonological shifts. Cf. Sokoloff (1990, 433).

⁵⁹ Yefet also translates it עקבה אלחמרא. See e.g., Ms. Evr.-Arab. I 3341, fol. 42 recto (JNL F 56827, *Ketiv*, 66).

◦ והיו (v. 21): ‘Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho and Beth-ḥoglah and ‘Emek-keziz.’

◦ ובית הערבה (v. 22): ‘and the Salt land [Beth-ha‘arabah] and the Wool city [Zemaraim] and Beth-el.’

◦ והעוים (v. 23): ‘and the Distorted [‘Avvim] and the Fertile [Parah] and the Gazelle [‘Ophrah].’

◦ וכפר (v. 24): ‘and the ‘Ammonite village [Kephār ‘Ammonah] reduplicated’;⁶⁰ it is possible that a bird picture was at its gate; and the Fort [Geva‘] – twelve cities with their villages.

◦ גבעון (v. 25): and the Fortress [Giv‘on], and Ramah, and Beeroth.

◦ והמצפה (v. 26): ‘and Mizpah and Chephirah and the Suctioner [Mozah].’

◦ ורקם (v. 27):

fol. 30 verso

‘and Reqem and Healing-Place [Irpeel]⁶¹ and Beautiful-in-its-high-position [Tarah].’

⁶⁰ As it appears twice in a row in the text, וכפר העמני העמנה, one as *Ketiv* and the other as *Qere*.

⁶¹ Sa‘adya’s translation of Joshua is lost, but it occurred to him to address the matter of toponyms in *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, ch. 3, entry ואחרי אשר, where he writes that עזאזל ‘Azazel, יקתאל Yoqteel (2 Kgs 14.7), יבנאל Yavneel (Josh. 15.11), and ירפאל Yirpeel (Josh. 18.27) are ‘all toponyms’ (הכל מקומות), without attempting to retrieve their etymological meanings.

◦ וְצִלְעַ (v. 28): and Zela^c ha-Eleph, and the Jebusite which is Jerusalem, Giv^cat Qiryat Ye^carim, fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.⁶²

Scripture informed that the lot of Binyamin lies between the lot of Judah and the lot of Joseph.⁶³ Afterwards it said וַיְהִי וְגו' לַפֶּאֶת הַגְּבוּל לָהֶם 'their border was' etc. (Josh. 18.12). The wording לַפֶּאֶת 'northward' (v. 12) means to the north of the Jordan,⁶⁴ because the Jordan is to the east. It showed that the Benjamin border is adjacent to the Ephraim border on the north side and is connected to the Judah border on the Negev side.⁶⁵ Then it began to mark the boundaries of his estate. It mentioned 'Beth El' (v. 13) and 'Beth Ḥoron' (v. 13), which is the beginning of Ephraim's estate.⁶⁶ It then noted from the west 'Qiryat Ye^carim' (Josh. 18.14), then began to mention the Negev side (v. 15) where it noted many places until it reached the 'Dead Sea tongue' (v. 19) which is the beginning of the Judahite district,⁶⁷ connected to the Jordan. Having noted the boundaries, it mentioned the big cities,

⁶² It appears that al-Kanzī here follows the Midrash that counts Zela^c and ha-Eleph as separate cities, and so for Giv^cat Qiryat Ye^carim. See, e.g., Tanḥuma (Warsaw ed.), Ki Tissa §13.

⁶³ וַיֵּצֵא גְבוּל גּוֹרְלָם בֵּין בְּנֵי יִהוּדָה וּבֵין בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף 'Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph' (Josh. 18.11).

⁶⁴ As reads what follows in the verse, 'from the Jordan'.

⁶⁵ So said Yefet in his commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

⁶⁶ See Josh. 16.5.

⁶⁷ See Josh. 15.2

which are the end of his estate. It noted twelve separately,⁶⁸ then another fourteen.⁶⁹ Note that ‘Zela’ (v. 28) is a toponym, and ‘ha-Eleph’ (v. 28) is a toponym.⁷⁰ The proof that ‘Zela’ is a toponym on its own is that it said ‘in the land of Binyamin in Zela’ (2 Sam. 21.14). This proves that ‘Zela’ is a toponym on its own;⁷¹ the same holds for ‘Giv‘at’ (Josh. 18.28),

fol. 31 recto

which is a toponym.

‘Qiryat’ (Josh. 18.28) is a toponym, because if we do not count them as four cities, their number will not reach fourteen, the first of them being ‘Giv‘on and ha-Rama’ (v. 25).⁷² Note that most of the names of the estates in this chapter have been clarified earlier, beginning with ‘Beth Awen’ (v. 12)⁷³ until ‘Jericho’⁷⁴ and Beth Ḥogla.⁷⁵

As regards ‘Emeq Qaziz’ (Josh. 18.21)—either it is a person’s name to which the valley is attributed or it means ‘dividing’, that is, ‘a divided valley’: it was one valley, but split in two by a

⁶⁸ Vv. 21–24.

⁶⁹ Vv. 25–28.

⁷⁰ So also Alfāsi (ed. Skoss, II:513), entry ל"צ (in the variants), Yefet, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto, and Qimḥi in his commentary.

⁷¹ So Yefet in his commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

⁷² So Yefet in his commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

⁷³ Initially mentioned in Josh. 7.2.

⁷⁴ Initially mentioned in Josh. 2.1.

⁷⁵ Initially mentioned in Josh. 15.6.

river, or a ravine according to another opinion, as it is said וְהָיָה הַנָּחַל בֵּינָיו וּבֵין הָעֵי 'and the valley between it and the 'Ai' (Josh. 8.11).

◦ וְצִמְרִים 'Zemarayim' (Josh. 18.22): it is possible that the wool of the flocks of this city is more abundant than in other places; that is why it was called 'Zemarayim'. Scripture used the dual form to show that the wool of each flock of wool is double the output of each flock of another city. It can be explained otherwise, in a more surprising way than the previous one, namely that warmth is called in the language of the Sages 'šemer': they said in chapter שְׁמֵר 'where the custom was' in Mishna 'One may set up chicken-houses for fowls' etc. regarding the hen that incubates the eggs: מְשֻׁם דֹּאכְתִּי לֹא פָּרַח 'because her *heat* has not yet left her' (b. Pesahim 55b) [...] the eggs; and they said in Bava Qamma (55b), chapter הַכּוֹנֵס רַבִּי זִירָא אָמַר כְּגוֹן דְּצִמְרָה: 'One who brings sheep into a shed': צֵאן לְדִיר 'R. Zera said: For instance, when he increased the heat (Bava Qamma 60a).

fol. 31 verso

[]⁷⁶ 'warmed it';⁷⁷ that is why hot fever is called 'burning fever' (b. Shabbat 67a). It is possible that [it is because] the climate of this city is warm and because of the fevers of the people.

⁷⁶ Here the author evidently refers to the Geonim, probably to Rav Hai.

⁷⁷ This is a literal Hebrew translation of the just mentioned Aramaic expression, already used by Rabbenu Ḥananel (see Sokoloff, 2002, 967) and R. Nathan of Rome in his *Arukh* (ed. Kohut, 1878–1892, VII:25).

◦ וְהַפְּרָה ‘and Parah’ [toponym] (Josh. 18.23) is [derived] from פְּרָה וְרִבָּה ‘be fertile and multiply’ (Gen. 35.11), as if this species, that is, the bulls and cows of this city, were thriving, multiplying, and fertile more than [those of] other cities; or that the trees of this place and its fruits grow, produce, and spring up more than in other places. The author of the *Book of Roots* (= R. Jonah ibn Janāḥ) said in root-entry פֿר"ה: “Abū Zakariā (= R. Yehuda Ḥayyūj) did not differentiate between פְּרָה וְרִבָּה ‘be fruitful and multiply’, whose meaning is ‘prosperity and multiplicity’, and פֿורה ראש ‘produces bitter poison’ (Deut. 29.17), which means ‘growth and proliferate’,⁷⁸ to which בֵּן פֶּרֶת יוֹסֵף בֵּן פֶּרֶת עָלִי עֵין ‘Joseph is a fruitful branch, a fruitful branch on a spring’ etc. (Gen. 49.22), וְתִאֲרֶכֶּה פִאֲרֵתוֹ ‘and its branches grew long’ (Ezek. 31.5)⁷⁹ are related.

◦ וְעֶפְרָה ‘and ‘Ophra’ (Josh. 18.23): A beautiful and handsome inheritance, as if it were a deer.

◦ וְכֶפֶר הָעַמֻּנָּה ‘Kephra ‘Ammonah’ (v. 24): A village attributed to ‘Ammon. It is also spelled with *yod*, הָעַמֻּנִי ‘Ammonay’, because quiescent letters [ʾ, h, w, y] alternate together.⁸⁰

◦ וְהָעֶפְנִי ‘Ophni’ (v. 24): This place may be attributed to a man named עֶפְנִי ‘Ophni’, as he is called הֶפְנִי ‘Hofni’ (1 Sam. 1.3 +), or his name is in Arabic عَفَّان ‘Affān’, as the ‘tomb of ‘Affān’

⁷⁸ See Ḥayyūj (eds. Sivan and Wated 2012, 276, פֿר"ה); Jastrow (1897, 200).

⁷⁹ Ibn Janāḥ (ed. Neubauer 1875, 585, פֿר"ה [= *Shorashim*, 411]).

⁸⁰ See Ḥayyūj (eds. Sivan and Wated 2012, 24–29); Jastrow (1897, 13–19); and Ibn Janāḥ (ed. Dérenbourg 1886, 87–91 [= *Riqma*, ed. Tene 1964, 104–10]).

is called in Egypt. It is possible that it means ‘doubled’, because כפול (e.g., Exod. 28.16) is rendered עִיף ‘doubled’ (in Aramaic; Onqelos, Exod. 28.16) (Sperber 1959–1973, I:137), meaning it was a duplicated place, like מערת המכפלה ‘the cave of Machpelah’⁸¹ (Cave of the Patriarchs; Gen. 23.9); or a bird was drawn on the gate of that place, [thus the toponym is derived] from עוף ‘bird’ (Lev. 17.13+), [in this case] the *n* and the *y* [in עֶפְנִי “Ophni”] are added [to the stem ‘*Oph*’].

3.3. Commentary on Judg. 9.8–15: T–S AS 173.64

verso

Yotam was a man of virtue in religion and opinion and was wise in composing parables. He composed a parable on what happened⁸² and said: הלוח הלוך העצים וג' ‘The trees went around’ etc. (Judg. 9.8) up to ויאמרו לזית מלכה עלינו ‘they said to the olive tree: be our king’ (v. 8). This is the *Qere* [מְלָכָה], whereas the *Ketiv* is מלוכה עלינו.

The same holds for the following utterance: לבי את מלכי עלינו ‘let you be our queen’ (v. 12). It is spelled מלוכי עלינו. Abū Zakariā Yahyā (Ḥayyūj) wrote: מְלָכָה עלינו ‘rule [MSG] over us’ and מְלָכִי עלינו ‘rule [FSG] over us’ are spelled מלוכה, מלוכי, according to their basic form, as their *waw* is the same *waw* as in מְלוּךְ. Whatever follows the form מְלוּךְ is basic. Yet they omitted it [the *w*] to

⁸¹ The word *machpelah* is interpreted in b. Eruvin 53a as referring to the patriarchs buried there doubled in *pairs*, Abraham and Sarah, etc., or, alternatively, because it contained *two* separate places.

⁸² So Yefet in his commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

facilitate the pronunciation. Whoever utters מְלוֹכָה and מְלוֹכִי follows their basic form and whoever says מְלֹכָה and מְלֹכִי uses their facilitated pronunciation. They [the Masoretes] made one *Qere* and the other *Ketiv*, so that nothing is missing from what is [linguistically] permitted'.⁸³

In its saying הלכו העצים 'the trees went out' he alluded to the people who met with Gideon and told him: מִשָּׁל בָּנוּ גַם אַתָּה גַם בִּנְךָ גַם בִּן בְּנִיךָ 'rule over us you, your son and your grandson' (Judg. 8.22) and he responded: לֹא אֲמַשֵּׁל אֲנִי בָכֶם וְלֹא יִמְשֹׁל בְּנִי בָכֶם 'I will not rule over you and my son will not govern you, the LORD will govern you' (v. 23).⁸⁴ His comparison of Israel to the trees is due to what Ezekiel said: הִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת עֵץ יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר בְּיַד אֶפְרַיִם וּשְׁבִטִי יִשְׂרָאֵל חִבְּרִיו וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם עָלָיו אֶת עֵץ יְהוּדָה 'I am going to take the stick of Joseph, which is in Ephraim's hand, and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick' (Ezek. 37.19) [...] his father

[]

⁸³ See also Maman and Ben Porat (2012, 138–39).

⁸⁴ So Yefet in his commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

3.4. T-S AS 139.35 verso

valuable trees.⁸⁵

in them [] with the harmful thorns.⁸⁶

He also compared the people of ‘Shechem and Beth Millo’ (Judg. 9.6) to the ‘cedars of Lebanon’ (v. 15) because of their power and highland virtue.⁸⁷ [...]

regarding power.

◦ הִחְדַּלְתִּי אֶת דִּשְׁנִי ‘Should I give up my fertiliser’ (v. 9) []

הִחְדַּלְתִּי the *he* is pointed with *qameṣ* []

from *he* to *het* and they turned the *he* [] into an exclamative *he*, which is the design...⁸⁸

⁸⁵ The content in full, as it appears in Yefet’s commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto, is: פמת'ל ואלדה בשורה אלזיתון ואבנה באלתינה ואבן אבנה: ‘He likened his father to an olive tree, his son to a fig, and his grandson to a vine, because all three are invaluable’.

⁸⁶ The content in full, as it appears in Yefet’s commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto, is: ... ומת'ל אבימלך ‘he likened Abimelech...’.

⁸⁷ So Yefet’s commentary, MS MIE 3361, fol. 65 recto.

⁸⁸ Ḥayyūj (Maman and Ben-Porat 2012, 138) analyses הִחְדַּלְתִּי as follows: the *he* has double duty, standing for both the interrogative *he* and the *hof'al he* הִהְחַדְלֵתִי*, for if it were merely the C-stem *he*, it would have been הִחְדַּלְתִּי, like הִחְלֵיתִי (1 Kgs 22.34), and the like. Ibn Janāḥ (ed. Neubauer 1875, 211–12, חד"ל [= *Shorashim*, 143]) noted that it is an intransitive *hif'il* verb in the pattern *hif'alti*. The *qameṣ* ornaments the word, similar to the *hatef qameṣ* הִתְחַרְבוּ המלכים ‘the kings have been destroyed (= slaughtered; 2 Kgs 3.23), which comes in place of *hatef pataḥ*. The particle אֶת here comes in the sense of מִן and the meaning in context is: Shall I abstain from my fertiliser and go move around the trees? The interrogative *he* is dropped. If the *he* in הִחְדַּלְתִּי were merely interrogative, the *het* would have been pointed with *qameṣ*.

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Qimḥi regarded the *he* as representing the *hif'il* or *hof'al* conjugation, like הַחֲדִלְתִּי with *qameṣ*, i.e., הַחֲדִלְתִּי מְדַשְׁנִי. In his *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (192, entry ל"ח), he added that the *qameṣ* under *het* serves as an 'ornament'.

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THE CACOPHONY OF COLOPHONS IN THE CAIRO CODEX OF THE PROPHETS

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The Cairo Codex of the Prophets is known by many names, including Codex C, the Cairo Codex, ק (qof), or, in more innocent times, by the name of its putative copyist, ‘the Moses b. Asher Codex’.¹ It is a fine example of the great biblical *maṣāḥif* (codices) produced in the Near East in the golden age of biblical production, the tenth–eleventh centuries. The codex earned its original fame and foremost place in scholarship thanks to its attribution to the elder masorete, Moses, father of Aaron b. Moses b. Asher himself, who was active in the ninth century and whose scribal colophon adorns the book. This reputation has naturally diminished following the widespread rejection of this attribution, and the Aleppo Codex has replaced it among those seeking to recover the core tradition of Ben Asher. But Codex C remains highly valued for the fine artistry of its illuminated carpet pages and the quality and design of its ornamented masoretic notes. And, as a great artistic achievement of the medieval Jewish communities

¹ It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this article to Geoffrey Khan, who, from the first lecture he gave to me in the Faculty of Oriental Studies (as was) in Cambridge, inspired my interest in medieval manuscripts and fired my enthusiasm for the Tiberian tradition.

of the Islamic world, it continues to inspire considerable scholarship.²

As the ‘Moses b. Asher Codex’, Codex C found early champions in Jacob Saphir, who presented its colophons in his *’Even Sappir* (1866–1874), Richard Gottheil, who introduced it to the English-speaking world in ‘Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo’ (1905)—hence its alternative identifier, ‘Gottheil 34’—and Paul Kahle, who dedicated a dozen densely argued pages to it in his published Schweich lectures (1959).³ More recently D. S. Löwinger published a facsimile (1971), and Federico Pérez Castro produced a complete edition of its biblical text (1979). As scepticism grew over its attribution to the hand of the famous Moses b. Asher himself, the codex became more valued for its paratexts and its ornaments than for its biblical text and its relationship to the authentic Ben Asher tradition. In this regard, the work of David Lyons (2000)—on C’s rich cumulative masora—and Leila Avrin (1974)—on its splendid illuminations (which we can see at

² Its whereabouts are currently unknown or, by those who do know, unacknowledged. I am reliant on microfilm images of the codex that were produced when it was still in the care of the Karaites in Egypt. Since then, it is widely suspected that it, along with one or two others (including Codex C3; see below, §2.3, note to ln. 19), has made its way to Israel—although this is not publicly acknowledged. The status of the book should be revealed and regularised. In the meantime, the reader is invited to consult the microfilm images at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cairo-codex-nevi%27im.pdf>

³ Originally published in 1947, the second edition in 1959 expands the discussion of Codex C.

the moment only in black and white microfilm imagery)—stands out.

Reading the Moses b. Asher colophon, Richard Gottheil and Paul Kahle were uncritical in their acceptance of the scribe's identity and of his relationship to the owner of the codex: "There is absolutely no reason to doubt the data here given. The codex was written in the city of Tiberias by the well-known Masorite, Moses ben Asher (ninth century), in the year 897" (Gottheil 1905, 640).

We are very well acquainted with the history of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets thanks to the colophons which it contains.... We learn from a Colophon written by Moseh b. Asher himself... that a Karaite living in Jerusalem, called Ya'bes b. Shelomo ha-Babli, commissioned the Codex to be made for his own use.... (Kahle 1959, 92).

Others took a decidedly more critical view, even quite early on, and challenged the attribution to Moses b. Asher—so, Jacob Leib Teicher in 1950:

The Cairo codex was not written by Moses b. Asher.... The colophons with the names of Moses b. Asher and of Ya'bez b. Solomon were written by a scribe, who copied the colophon with M. b. Asher's name from another codex. (Teicher 1950, 25).

This did not endear him to Kahle, who argued back, but it is now widely accepted that Moses b. Asher did not produce the codex himself, and that his colophon was copied into it.⁴

⁴ See Kahle's forthright reply to Teicher on the questions he had raised about all four of Kahle's 'Ben Asher manuscripts', C, A, L, and Or.4445,

Colette Sirat is representative of most modern, expert opinion:

We read in a first colophon that Moses ben Asher wrote this codex of the entire Bible in 895–896 CE, in Tiberias. In fact, this colophon was probably that of the model copied by the scribe, because another, undated, colophon follows: “This codex is the one that Yabets ben Solomon had the merit of having [copied] for his own personal use...” (Sirat 2002, 42).

The great biblical scholar Israel Yeivin was guardedly non-committal in his *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (1980, as translated by E. J. Revell): “According to its colophon it was written in 896 by Mosheh ben Asher (the father of Aharon)” (Yeivin 1980, 20). But in the revised Hebrew version of 2011, he brought science: “Some researchers have challenged the authenticity of the colophon of the manuscript, considering it to have been written in the 11th-century. Chemical analysis (C14) carried out in 1996 supports this opinion” (Yeivin, 2011, 18; my translation)—this was when scholars were given access to the codex in the Karaite synagogue, and a loose fragment was taken away for analysis.

It is not my purpose here to rehearse again the arguments against the attribution of its copying to Moses b. Asher. It is a settled matter to all but diehards, and the further technical analysis that might help convince any lingering doubters will not be possible until the codex emerges legally into the light. If, as is

which begins ominously, “Dr. Teicher recently published an article...” (1951, 161).

likely given the evidence we do have, the codex is a product of the eleventh century, and comes from flourishing Egypt, rather than the difficult borderland of Palestine, then it is one of a great many that we have from that time and place. Codex C, however, stands out among them, and retains an inherent prestige not solely because of its early purported history, but also upon two further significant facts that have become associated with the book: that Codex C had been housed in a compound in Jerusalem as a dedication to the Karaite community, and that, most notably like that other very special Bible, the Aleppo Codex (Codex A), it had been redeemed from the Crusaders, who had seized it when they took Jerusalem in 1099 CE. These two historical facts lend weight to the value of the codex, above and beyond any textual or artistic value that it possesses: the codex must already have been greatly valued in its day, and it sensationally survived Frankish pillaging that destroyed or dispersed so much of the Jewish heritage of the Holy Land. It has therefore some of the reflected glory of the Aleppo Codex, through having a similar backstory of survival against the odds. Unlike Codex A, however, which can (most likely) be traced in historical records already in the twelfth century, there is no external historical record for Codex C. Its story during the Middle Ages must be derived solely from the book itself, from its numerous colophons. The purpose of the current article is to assess the reliability of these two broadly accepted and widely promulgated facts of Codex C's history, through a re-examination of the relevant colophons.

There are in fact numerous additional notes and colophons in Codex C, but of particular interest are the dedication colophons, which gave the book as ‘holy’ property, to be held in communal ownership in perpetuity. Early scholarship on Codex C was not solely concerned with Moses b. Asher’s scribal colophon and did take notice of the dedication notes and the significance they gave the book. Richard Gottheil (1905, 641) was first to tell the tale: “the MS. was written at the request of one Ya‘beẓ ben Solomon, the Babylonian.... At a later time he donated it to the Karaite community in Jerusalem....” Kahle (1959, 95) gave a similar, but more loquacious, interpretation of the colophons: “it was kept in the owner’s grounds in Jerusalem and nobody was allowed to remove it. The Codex was dedicated to the *Ḳaraites*...” (Kahle 1959, 94), and “[t]he donation of the Codex to the *Ḳaraite* community of al-*Ḳāhira* took place אחרֵי גאולתו ‘after its restoration.’ These words refer to the seizure of valuable MSS by the Crusaders....” Noticeably unlike with the Moses b. Asher colophon, the views of later palaeographers do not diverge greatly from the interpretations of these earlier historians. Michèle Dukan, who made a study of Hebrew biblical codices before 1280 CE, agreed with Colette Sirat in suggesting that not only was Moses b. Asher not the scribe, but that the scribe was actually unknown (Ya‘beẓ being the owner and commissioner), adducing her view that only owners, not scribes, dedicate codices (Dukan 2006, 299). She reported two dedications of the codex: “une première fois par Yabez b. Salomon à Jérusalem.... La seconde consecration est de 1129/30, elle est fait de DAVID b. YEFET qui

l'a consacré à son tour, à la synagogue karaïte du Caire" (Dukan 2006, 299).⁵ Note that she gave a specific date.

The powerful palaeographic troika of Malachi Beit-Arié, Colette Sirat, and Mordechai Glatzer, in their study of early eastern Hebrew Bible codices, suggested that "Il semble donc que ce manuscrit faisait partie de ceux dont les Croisés s'emparèrent lors de la prise de Jérusalem, en 1099, et qui furent rachetés à Ascalon et apportés au Caire" (Beit-Arié et al. 1997, 28).⁶ The connection with the Crusaders is made because of the history of the Aleppo Codex, and the evidence from documents found in the Cairo Geniza on the Franks' seizure and resale of books following

⁵ 'a first time by Jabez b. Solomon in Jerusalem.... The second dedication was in 1129/30, and was carried out by David b. Yefet who dedicated it in his turn to the Karaite synagogue of Cairo' (my translation).

⁶ 'It seems therefore that this manuscript was among those seized by the Crusaders during the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, and which were redeemed in Ashqelon and brought to Cairo' (my translation). The book has a parallel French and Hebrew commentary in which the two languages do not always say the same thing. But the parallel Hebrew commentary in this case does read very similarly (Beit-Arié et al. 1997, 27): "...אפשר אפוא להניח שגם כתב היד...". Sirat reiterated this in her *Hebrew Manuscripts*: "This volume seems to have been one of the Bibles seized by the Crusaders during the conquest of Jerusalem and ransomed by the Jews of Cairo" (Sirat 2002, 246).

the conquest of the Holy Land by the First Crusade.⁷ Not everyone blames the Crusaders in this case, but this is the general consensus. Jean-Dominique Barthélemy's 'Seleucids' are an outlier.⁸

On what are these conclusions based? There is no external history for this particular codex in the Middle Ages. Instead, these details have been derived from the ownership colophon of the codex's original owner, Jabez b. Solomon, the commissioner of the book, and from the dedication colophons, of which there are several, in his name. The story is further enlivened by additional dedication colophons in a different name, referring to another act

⁷ On which, see Goitein (1952, 168–75) and, specifically for the Aleppo Codex, Ben-Zvi (1960, 6–7). Cambridge University Library T-S 12.722 is a page of a book, with Sa'adya's commentary on Isaiah, which was taken by the Crusaders, as the Latin note on it proves: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-00012-00722/1>.

⁸ Barthélemy (2012, 247 fn. 61):

It appears that it was in 1071, at the time of the pillage of Jerusalem by the Seleucids, that MS C and MS A were taken to Cairo, where they were redeemed, the one for the Karaite synagogue, the other for the synagogue "of the Jerusalemmites," where Maimonides had the opportunity to consult it.

'Seleucids' must be a mistake of the translator for 'Seljuks'. In any case, the basis for this conclusion is unclear, as there is no evidence for the seizure of Jewish texts by the Seljuks, unlike the felonious Franks. This is a good example, however, of how facts make their way down to the secondary literature with a certainty—sometimes with an added twist or two—unwarranted by the evidence. Anyone reading Barthélemy's *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament* would have no idea how tenuous these firmly asserted facts are.

of donating the book. Dedication (or also ‘dedicatory’) colophons are relatively frequent in medieval biblical codices, particularly in the more prestigious or luxurious copies, and represent the importance of charitable giving in the medieval world.⁹ To establish where these facts come from it is necessary to look at the colophons in order, and establish which information comes from which. This should help us distinguish reliable information from what previous scholarship has read between, and beyond, the lines.

The ownership colophon of Jabez b. Solomon is written on the folio numbered 576 on the microfilm, on the reverse of which is Moses b. Asher’s scribal colophon (fol. 575). Jabez’s colophon has been given in full in various earlier publications, but I give my version here.

1.0. Ownership Colophon

1.1. Text

1. זה הדיפתר מה שזכה יעבץ בן
2. שלמה הבבלי נח נפש ועשה
3. אותו לעצמו להגות בו מעמלו
4. ומיגיע כפיו ומזיעת אפו לכבוד
5. אלהי ישראל שיאמר יוצר
6. נשמות ויזכהו להגות בו ולנצור
7. ולשמור כל דבר שיש בו ויתן לו

⁹ For dedication colophons in biblical manuscripts, see Dukan (2006: 134–141). They are not limited to biblical manuscripts. See also Outhwaite (2023) for a sceptical view.

8. חלק טוב ולב טוב וגורל נעים
9. בעולם הזה ושכר טוב לעולם
10. הבא ויזכה יעבץ בן שלמה
11. נוח נפש לחזות בנועם יי'
12. ולבקר בהיכלו ויתן לו אלהי
13. ישראל בנים ובני בנים הוגים
14. בתורה ועסוקים במצוות וכל
15. הברכות הכלולות בתורה ובגב'
16. ובכתובים יחולו על ראשו ועל
17. זרעו וכל ישראל בכלל ברכה
18. אמן

1.2. Translation

‘This is the volume that Jabez b. Solomon the Babylonian—his soul be at rest—rightfully acquired,¹⁰ and he had it made for himself to study it, out of [the proceeds of] his own labour, the toil of his hands, and the sweat of his brow, to honour the God of Israel who is called the Creator of Souls. And may He grant him¹¹ to study it, protect and keep everything that is in it, and give him

¹⁰ While זכה has the meaning ‘be worthy of’, it is also used in a strict and legalistic sense of rightful ownership or possession, e.g., ואמר ‘He said “I have acquired it”, then he has acquired it’ (m. Bava Meši’a 1.3); hence ‘rightfully acquired’, by which I understand that Jabez commissioned its production. Kahle (1959, 92) reads ‘which it was granted’, whereas Beit-Arié et al. (1997, 27) prefer ‘est ce qu’a mérité Jabez’, as does Avrin (1974, 12) ‘which it was granted... to acquire’.

¹¹ There is a parallel in the ownership colophon of Codex Leningrad, ‘and may He grant him to always study his Torah’ (ln. 11), and Beit-Arié et al. (1997, 27) also read ‘qu’il lui donne’.

a good portion, a good heart, and a pleasant lot in this world, and a good reward for the next world. And may He grant Jabez b. Solomon—his soul be at rest—the privilege of “beholding the beauty of the LORD¹² and to visit His temple” (Ps. 27.4). And may the God of Israel give him sons and grandsons who study the Torah and occupy themselves with the commandments. And may all the blessings contained in the Torah, the Prophets,¹³ and the Writings fall around his head, and around his descendants, and all Israel is included in the blessing. Amen.’

1.3. Notes

2–3. לעצמו אותו ועשה ‘and he made it for himself’ is the literal rendering, though the meaning is ‘he had it made for himself’, as we find, for instance, in the ownership colophon of Codex Leningrad (RNL Firkovich Evr. I B19a, fol. 1r), where though it says ועשה אותו לעצמו להגות בו מעמלו ומיגיע כפיו ומזיעת אפו ‘and he [Ibn Yazdād ha-Kohen] made it for himself, to study it, out of [the proceeds of] his own labour, the toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow’, the scribe identifies himself as Samuel b. Jacob, and therefore the meaning is ‘he [Ibn Yazdād] commissioned it himself’ (Outhwaite 2018, 321–24). Note that the formula used in Codex C for the commissioning of a Bible is very similar to that of the early eleventh-century Codex Leningrad’s colophon, the only real difference being the scribe Samuel b. Jacob’s unorthodox spelling מזיעת אפו for C’s מזיעת אפו (Outhwaite 2018, 324 fn. 14).

¹² Abbreviated to three yods with a dot above.

¹³ ‘Prophets’ is abbreviated, in order to keep a neat left-hand edge (a line filler is used in ln. 5, too).

From this colophon, we learn that Jabez b. Solomon was of Babylonian origin or heritage. In using that *nisba* (gentilic) we can be pretty sure that he was not then resident in Babylon. But beyond that we learn little, as much of the language is formulaic and can be found in many similar ownership colophons, not least Codex Leningrad. There is nothing in this colophon that would connect Jabez with Karaism, unlike, for instance, the use of a specifically Karaite system of dating, as in Codex Leningrad (Outhwaite 2018, 327–28), or more explicit expressions of Karaism, such as references to the sighting of the moon, the ripening of the barley, or the term *ba‘ale miqra* (Outhwaite 2023, 413 esp. fn. 62). This should not necessarily surprise us, since genuine ownership colophons are often very sparing in their details: they are to assert ownership and rely on often hackneyed phrases. They are not really intended to give a life story or enunciate a creed.

Colophons subsequent to Jabez b. Solomon’s ownership note, specifically those that dedicated the book in Jerusalem, have added meat to the bones of his and Codex C’s story. It is from these that Kahle and Gottheil wove the tale of its dedication and ultimate redemption. There are half a dozen of them, scattered across different pages in the codex.

2.0. Jabez b. Solomon Dedication Colophon 1

This dedication is in the right-hand margin of a page containing Masoretic lists of the number of verses in all the books of the Bible and their middle words (fol. 572). It is in a different hand to Jabez’s ownership colophon, less neatly written with a ragged

left edge. It is on the reverse of the leaf that contains David b. Yefet's dedication colophon 2 (fol. 571, for which, see below).

2.1. Text

1. זה הדפּתר
2. הנביאים שהקדיש
3. אותו יעבץ בן
4. שלמה אלכלפי
5. בירושלם עיר הקדש
6. אלהים יכונניה עד עולם
7. ללקראין אשר יעשו
8. את המועדים ע
9. ביראת הירחים
10. יקראו בו כלם ולא
11. ימנע אחד מהם
12. מלקרוא בו במקום
13. אשר הוא מונח בו
14. בשבתות ובחדשים
15. ובמועדים ולא
16. ימכר ולא יקנה
17. וכל מי שיגנוב אותו
18. או ימכור אותו או
19. יקנה אותו או יעבט
20. אותו ארור הוא
21. לאלהי ישראל
22. וכל מי שישמור אותו
23. ויקרא בו יש יהוה
24. ישמרהו ויחייהו
25. ואשר בארץ
26. וכל מי אשר

27. יוציא אותו מחצר
 28. יעבץ בן שלמה
 29. [י]מחה מספר חיים
 30. ועם צדיקים אל
 31. יכתב: אמן:
 32. וברוכים הם בשם
 33. יהוה כל שומריו
 34. והקוראים בו באמת
 35. אמן:

2.2. Translation

‘This volume is the Prophets that Jabez b. Solomon al-Kalafi dedicated in the Holy City of Jerusalem—God establish it forever—to the Karaites who keep the festivals according to the sighting of the moons, so that all may read from it and that no one is prevented from reading from it, in the place in which it is placed, on Sabbaths and on new moons and on festivals. And it is not to be sold, nor bought, and whoever steals it, or sells it, or buys it, or gives it in pledge will be cursed by the God of Israel, and whoever keeps it and reads from it, the LORD will protect him and preserve him and those in the land. And anyone who removes it from the compound of Jabez b. Solomon, his name will be wiped from the book of life and he will not be counted among the righteous.¹⁴ Amen. And blessed in the Name of the LORD be all who keep it and who read from it sincerely, Amen.’

¹⁴ Derived from the curse in Ps. 69.29.

2.3. Notes

4. אֶלְכַּלְפִּי ‘al-Ḳalafī’. This is the first and only appearance of this *nisba* (gentilic) in the codex. Avrin (1974, 20) reads “al-Khalifi (or Khalfi)” and suggests (1974, 28) that it might be a title derived from the title Caliph, used honorifically, because he was “a man of material substance” in the Jerusalem Karaite community. It is an imaginative suggestion, but with no basis in fact. He commissioned an expensive Bible, but we can say no more than that about his status and means. Kahle (1959, 93–94 fn. 1) reads “al-Khalafi,” Beit-Arié, Sirat, and Glatzer (1997, 25) “al-Khalfi.” In the absence of any further information, we should perhaps read it as ‘al-Ḳalafī’ (like Kahle) and take it as an Iranian toponymic, since Iran boasts a number of settlements called Khalaf. The likeliest is in Khūzestān province, from where the Tustarī Karaite clan hailed and which therefore had clear and extensive links with Jewish North African families, who were involved in trade related to the province’s textile industry.

9. בִּירְאָת הַיָּרֵחִים ‘the sighting of the moons’. This is the intention, and the meaning is mirrored in dedication colophon 2, as well as frequently in other colophons found in the Firkovich Collection, where phrases usually found in the Karaite *ketubba* make their way into colophons, apparently to underline the creed of the Karaite owners (Outhwaite 2023, 413 and fn. 62). However, rather than writing רְאִיתָ אוֹרָא (or even רְאִיתָ), the scribe has apparently written יְרֵאָת, from the root יָרָא, literally ‘at the fear of the moons’ (plural!)—this is an error, as the reference should clearly be to the Karaites’ calendrical practice of observing the new moon, not to trembling at moons in general. Neither Avrin nor

Kahle comment on this oddity, though Saphir (1866, 15a) did express his surprise by writing בִּירָאֵת (?) הִירָחִים (?).

12. מִלְקֵרוֹא ‘from reading’. Although it is hard to be sure on the basis of the images, it appears that an original spelling of מִלְקֵרוֹת was altered by changing the final ת to an א, a more orthodox biblical spelling. In the Medieval Hebrew from the Cairo Geniza, the preferred Rabbinic Hebrew form לְקֵרוֹת is frequent, though the biblical forms לְקֵרָאֵת and לְקֵרוֹא are both attested (Outhwaite 2000, 132–33).¹⁵ It is interesting that Jacob Saphir (1866, 15a), who is a reliable transcriber of the colophons, has לְקֵרוֹת in his version.

19. יַעְבֹּד ‘gives in pledge’. This is not a very common verb in colophons, since its meaning is usually encapsulated by the much commoner גָּאֵל ‘redeem’, but it is also found in the dedication colophons of Cairo Codex 3 (C3, also known as the Misha’el b. ‘Uzzi’el Bible), which sat alongside C in the Karaite synagogue in Cairo (Outhwaite 2023, 402, 405).

23. ‘LORD’ is the Tetragrammaton, both here and in ln. 33, unlike in the ownership colophon, where it is piously abbreviated to a triple *yod*.

¹⁵ It is also found in the III-y form לְקֵרוֹת in the lost colophons of the Aleppo Codex (Ofer 1989, 288). On the other hand, in some colophons from the Firkovich collections I have found a number of infinitival forms showing suspicious over-concern with the spelling. For example, RNL Firkovich Evr II B34 has a colophon with לְקֵרָאֵת and, a few lines later, לְקֵרָאֵת, both vocalised in an otherwise unvocalised text. I find the whole colophon to be dubious and inauthentic.

3.0. Jabez b. Solomon Dedication Colophon 2

This colophon is written in the left-hand margin of the *Seder Miqra* (סדר מקרא) on fol. 573, on the page opposite that containing Jabez b. Solomon's dedication colophon 1.¹⁶

3.1. Text

1. זה הדפטר שמונה נביאים
2. שהקדיש אותו יעבץ בן שלמה
3. בירושלם עיר הקדש אלהים
4. יכונניה עד עולם סלה
5. ללקראין העושים את המועדים
6. על ראית הירח יקראו בו כלם
7. בשבתות ובחדשים ובמועדים
8. לא ימכר ולא יקנה וכל מי
9. שיגנוב אותו או ימכור אותו
10. או יקנה אותו או יעבוס אותו
11. ארור הוא לאלהי ישראל
12. וכל מי שישמור אותו ויקים
13. מצות יעבץ בן שלמה
14. בעל הדפטר הזה יהוה
15. ישמרהו ויחייהו ואשר בארץ:

In the margin, beginning at the end of ln. 9, there is an addition, in a different pen and hand:

1. או יוציא אותו
2. מחצר יעבץ

¹⁶ The *Seder Miqra* is a Masoretic composition found in a number of different versions in the *masora finalis* of Bibles as well as in the *Diqduqe ha-Ṭe'amim*; see Dotan (2020, 119–27).

3. בן שלמה
 4. יהי אחריתו
 5. להכרית בדור
 6. אחד ימח שמם

3.2. Translation

‘This volume is Eight Prophets¹⁷ that Jabez b. Solomon dedicated in the Holy City of Jerusalem—God establish it forever, *sela*—to the Karaites, who perform the festivals according to the sighting¹⁸ of the moon. May everyone read from it on Sabbaths, on new moons, and on festivals. It may not be sold and it may not be bought, and whoever steals it or sells it or buys it or gives it in pledge, he will be cursed by the God of Israel. And whoever keeps it and upholds the commandment of Jabez b. Solomon, owner of this volume, the LORD will protect him and preserve him and those in the land.’

The addition in the left margin reads: ‘Or whoever takes it out of the compound of Jabez b. Solomon, may his posterity be cut off. “May their names be wiped out in a single generation” (Ps. 109.13).’

3.3. Notes

6. ראות הירח ‘the sighting of the moon’ is written as expected here.

¹⁷ ‘Eight prophets’ lacks a definite article, unlike הנביאים in the previous colophon.

¹⁸ Kahle (1959, 93 fn. 1) and Avrin (1974, 248) both read ראות, but it is more likely to be a *yod* than a *waw*.

14. In the expression יהוה ישמרהו ויחייהו we again have the Tetragrammaton, not the abbreviated version as found in the ownership colophon. Usually, in medieval blessings such as this, we would expect a pious circumlocution, such as ישמרהו, ישמרהו האל, צורו, or צורהו, rather than an invocation of the Holy Name.¹⁹

Although Jacob Saphir gives this colophon in volume 1 of his *’Even Sappir* (1866, 15a), he does not record the additional lines that have been added to the colophon on its left. This is a bit odd, as he is quite assiduous about recording the texts of the colophons.

4.0. Jabez b. Solomon Dedication Colophon 3

A long dedication colophon is found on the reverse of a decorated carpet page, fol. 584,²⁰ on the right-hand side of the page. There are other notes, partial and complete, on the same page.

4.1. Text

1. זה הדפטר אשר הקדיש
2. יעבץ בן שלמה ללקראין
3. בירושלם עיר הקדש
4. לא ימכר ולא יגאל ולא
5. יעבט ולא יוציא [ו] אותו

¹⁹ Compare, for instance, ישמרם צורם, which we find in dedication colophon 4, below.

²⁰ This page number is according to Avrin (1974, 252–54), though the image itself appears to have the number 57[?] on it—it is not fully legible. Until the codex itself becomes available, there will be some doubt about the correct arrangement of the pages.

6. מביתו וארורים [ה]ם
7. בשם יהוה אלהי
8. ישראל כל מוכריו
9. וכל קוניו וכל מוציאו
10. מחצר יעבץ בן שלמה
11. בעל הדפתר הזה ולא
12. יאבה יהוה סלוח להם
13. כי אז יעשן אף יהוה
14. וקנאתו בהם ורבעה
15. בם כל האלה הכתובה
16. בספר הזה ומחה יהוה
17. את שמם מתחת
18. השמים והבדילם יהוה
19. לרעה מכל שבטי יש'
20. וכל הקללות הכתובות
21. בכל ספרי המקרא ידבקו
22. בם ובזרעם אמן
23. וברוכים הם בשם יהוה
24. כל שומריו והקוראים בו
25. בו באמת יחיו ויראו
26. ישועת ישראל אמן

4.2. Translation

'This is the volume that Jabez b. Solomon dedicated to the Karaites in the Holy City of Jerusalem.²¹ It may not be sold, and it may not be redeemed, and it may not be given in pledge, and it may not be taken out of his house. And they will be cursed in the

²¹ Avrin (1974, 252) reads ירושלים, but the toponym is written defectively, as is usual in these colophons.

name of the LORD God of Israel all who sell it, and all who buy it, and all who take it out of the compound of Jabez b. Solomon, owner of this volume. And the LORD will not be willing to pardon them, but surely the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against them: all the oaths that are written in this book will settle on them, and the LORD will wipe out their name from under Heaven, and the LORD will single them out for evil from all the tribes of Israel.²² And all the curses that are written in all the books of the Scriptures will cling to them and to their descendants.²³ Amen. And blessed be they in the name of the LORD who keep it and who read from it with a sincere heart:²⁴ they will live to see the deliverance of Israel. Amen.'

4.3. Notes

4–5. *וְלֹא יִגְאָל וְלֹא יִעֲבֹט* 'and it may not be redeemed, and it may not be given in pledge'. Here we have the pleonastic use of *עֲבֹט* and *גִּאָל*, where really one or the other verb would be enough.

13, 16. 'LORD' is given as the Tetragrammaton, not in an abbreviated form.

²² Phrases derived from Deut. 29.19–20.

²³ Avrin (1974, 252) reads *וּזְרָעָם*, but the *ב* is visible and is read by Kahle (1959, 93 fn. 1).

²⁴ The image is not very clear at this point. Avrin (1974, 252) and Kahle (1959, 93 n. 1) read *בּוּ בְּאֵמֶת*, but it could possibly read *בּוּ בְּאֵמֶת*, i.e., mistakenly repeating *בּוּ* from the line above, 'from it sincerely', as in the dedication colophon on fol. 572.

5.0. Jabez b. Solomon Dedication Colophon 4

This note is written in three lines, in a different, typologically later, hand to the other dedication colophons, at a diagonal, in the blank space to the left of dedication colophon 3 on fol. 584.

5.1. Text

1. זה הדפטר אשר הקדיש יעבץ
2. בן שלמה ללקראין ישמרם צורם
3. בירושלים עיר הקודש תב' ות'

5.2. Translation

‘This is the volume that Jabez b. Solomon dedicated to the Karaites in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be rebuilt and re-established.’

5.3. Notes

3. Both ירושלים and קודש are written *plene*, unlike in the other three dedications.

3. 'תב' ות' is a stylistically later blessing on Jerusalem than that used in dedications 1 and 2.

There are many dedication colophons in this codex. The first three all say essentially the same thing, but in slightly different ways. They all spell Jerusalem defectively; they all write the full Tetragrammaton; they all have slight unexpected oddities of language. They all stress the Karaite and Jerusalem connections of the codex. The fourth is an outlier, in hand (ostensibly later) and style, and appears to be a summary of the colophon next to it: a pithier version of Jabez’s dedication tale.

It is from this plethora of colophons that Gottheil and Kahle first elaborated the story of the codex's dedication. They supply all the facts that are lacking from Jabez b. Solomon's ownership note. They tell us that Jabez was known as al-Ḳalafī, that he was resident in Jerusalem, since his *ḥaṣer* was there, and that he was indeed a Karaite—none of these things can be gleaned from the ownership colophon itself. Indeed, Kahle elevates Jabez on the basis of these notes alone to a “prominent Karaite” (and Avrin follows him in this): “Der prominente Ḳaräer Ja‘beṣ b. Schelomo ha-Babli in Jerusalem beauftragt auf S. 585” (Kahle 1961: caption to pl. 16). Moreover, we learn that Jabez himself dedicated the book as Karaite public property in perpetuity, not to his descendants or any subsequent owners.

The addition of details, such as Jabez's *nisba* al-Ḳalafī, which is suggestive of a Persian Karaite, lend colour to the story, and the repetition of phrases found in the colophons of other books might inspire confidence: such that it should be stored in a specific compound, or that it should be read on “sabbaths and festivals.” But should we really accept these as signs of authenticity? I have argued elsewhere that they can just as readily be taken as signs of fakery when we have other reasons to be suspicious of a colophon (Outhwaite 2023, 412–16).

6.0. Qodesh Markers

Separate to the dedication colophons, we find scattered throughout the book some *qodesh* notes, which mark the book as ‘holy property’. We often find these in the Great Bibles that have been dedicated to the synagogues of medieval Egypt. Sometimes they

take the form of קדש ליהוה or קדש ליי written across the top of every leaf or bifolium in the book, and other times they occur less frequently. A single bifolium of a Great Bible from the Cairo Geniza, Lewis-Gibson Bible 6.88, has, for instance, קדש ליהוה, written on each leaf (so, four times), as well as a calligraphic note קדש ליהוה אלהי ישראל לא ימכר ולא יגאל written in the blank space at the end of the book of Job.²⁵ In Codex C, we find notes before the book of Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. They consist of קדש written at the top right-hand corner of the right-hand leaf, and ליהוה written on the opposite corner of the left-hand leaf. Unusually, however, we also have, in the same hand, notes written in the bottom corners, which stress the dedication conditions, e.g., ארור מוציאו מחצר in the bottom right of f. 342,²⁶ and, opposite it on the other leaf, יעבץ בן שלמה (fol. 343). Similarly fols 168 and 169 have לא יוצא מחצר and יעבץ בן שלמה. Others just repeat לא יגאל, etc. There are two things to say about these notes: the addition of text to the bottom of the page like this is less common, and the hand of these notes is likely the same as that which added text to dedication colophon 2.

This ends the colophons and notes that relate to the dedication by Jabez b. Solomon. But it was apparently not the only time the book was dedicated to the Karaite community.

²⁵ Cambridge University Library and Bodleian Libraries Oxford, Lewis-Gibson Bible 6.88, which can be seen here: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-LG-BIBLE-00006-00088/1>.

²⁶ This is hard to read in the microfilm image, but it certainly appears to be מוציאו and not מהוציאו, which would have been more natural. The phrase is clumsy.

7.0. David b. Yefet Dedication Colophon 1

At the end of 2 Kings and before Isaiah 1.1 (folio numbered 273 on the MS) there is a dedication written in space around the decoration (perhaps a pomegranate) in the top right-hand corner of the leaf. The hand is a much more cursive and ostensibly later than that of the Jabez b. Solomon dedications, and should probably be dated to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.

7.1. Text

1. זה הספר קדש ליזי אלהי יש' בבית הכנסת באלקאהרה
2. ארור מוכרו וארור קונהו וארור מחליף קדושתו
3. וארור מעביטו הקדישו השר דויד
4. בן השר יפת נכר אלסכנדרי השם יכפיל שכרו
5. ויהיה בעזרתו הוא ושומר זה הספר
6. והקורא בו ושלום

7.2. Translation

‘This book is a dedication to the LORD God of Is[rael] in the synagogue in Cairo. Cursed be he who sells it and cursed be he who buys it, and cursed be he who alters this dedication, and cursed be he who gives it in pledge. It was dedicated by the Prince David b. the Prince Yefet, known as the Alexandrian. May the Name double his reward and may He be at his aid—him and whomever preserves this book and whomever reads from it. And peace.’

7.3. Notes

1. זה הספר ‘This book’ has the indeterminate pronoun used adjectivally before the determinate noun, as is common in post-biblical Hebrew. Avrin (1974, 17) translates it “This is the book... which is consecrated,” but *qodeš* is a noun and there is no relativiser; she correctly translates זה הספר as ‘this book’ in its second occurrence, however.

1. לִי ‘to the LORD’. The colophon uses the pious abbreviation *yod-waw-yod* for the Tetragrammaton, an abbreviation that is more commonly found in later (after 1250 CE) manuscripts and often (but not exclusively) in Karaite contexts.

2. מחליף קדושתו ‘Who changes its dedication’, which is to say anyone who would alter the dedication colophons and status of the book. Avrin (1974, 17) translates it too literally as ‘he who would change its holiness’, whereas קדושה refers to the dedication of the book itself.

3. מעביטו ‘Who gives it in pledge’. Here the root עבט is used in place of גאל and therefore is not seemingly redundant, as in some of the earlier dedications.

4. השר דויד ‘The Prince David’ places the honorific title before the name, which tends to be a late (post-1250 CE) stylistic feature, but is also a feature found more often in Karaite contexts. ‘Prince’ (*śar*) was used in the Classical Geniza Period as an honorific title in Hebrew for those Jews who served in the Islamic court, and continued thereafter into the Mamluk period to denote a community leader; see, for instance, the Karaite memorial list published

by Mann (1935, 257), כב' ג'ק' הש' הח' וה' משה הלוי, i.e., כבוד גדולת, קדושת השר החכם והמשכיל משה הלוי.

5. נכר אלסכנדרי 'Known as the Alexandrian', uses the Arabic *nisba* al-Sikandari. Gottheil (1905, 640–41) read נכד אלמכבתי and stated that "David is said to have been the grandson of אלמכבתי." The hand is very cursive, but we would expect נכר in this context, and the similar word is more clearly written in ln. 4 of the longer version of this colophon on fol. 571.

This dedication reveals that the codex has been dedicated by the community leader David b. Yefet the Alexandrian. I have been unable to identify this particular David. Eliyahu Ashtor (1944, II:552) lists a potential relative (father or son), Yefet b. David, a leading Egyptian Karaite who lived in the fourteenth century, but the two names are not that uncommon.

8.0. Short Dedication Note

On the same page (fol. 273), under the framed note of the number of verses in Kings, is a brief dedication, in the same hand and using very similar language.

8.1. Text

1. זה הספר קדש ליוי על עדת
2. בני מקרא בבנסת אלקאהרה

8.2. Translation

'This book is a dedication to the LORD for the congregation of the Karaites in the synagogue of Cairo.'

8.3. Notes

Short and to the point, this dedicates the book to the Karaite congregation in Cairo. The fact the dedication is in Cairo, and not Fustāt, is in keeping with the Mamluk era (presupposed from the handwriting), when Cairo became the main Jewish centre. It is notable it does not attempt to define the Karaites by their practices or creed, unlike the Jabez b. Solomon dedications.

9.0. David b. Yefet Dedication 2

This is found at the end of the Twelve Minor Prophets (after Malachi), on the folio numbered 571 in the MS. This long dedication was written in space to the left of the existing decorative element (a pomegranate?) and the framed number of verses in the Twelve, in the top left-hand corner of the leaf. It is in the same hand as the other David b. Yefet notes.

9.1. Text

1. זה הספר הנביאים קדש ליוי
2. אלהים אלהי יש' הקדיש אותו אחרי
3. גאולתו השר הגדול דויד בן השר
4. הגדול יפת נכר אלסכנדרי על
5. עדת בני מקרא לקראת בו
6. בימי השבתות והתעניות
7. בכנסת אלקאהרה תב' ותכ'
8. ואם הוא או איש מזרעו יושב
9. ישימהו השמש לפניו ואין רשות
10. לאדם להוציא או מבית הכנסת כי אם חס
11. ושלוש לצורך וישיביהו בעת ההשקט
12. וכל המחליף התנאי הזה או הקדושה

13. הזאת ארור הוא ליוי וכל הקללות ידבקו
14. בו וכל השומר
15. והקורא בו והמשיבו
16. אל מקומו אחר הרגז
17. ברוך הוא בשם יוי
18. וכל הברכות והשכר
19. הטוב והשלומות
20. יהיו על ראשו
21. ועל ראש המקדיש
22. השר דויד וזרעו
23. עד סוף כל הדורות
24. וכל ישראל:

9.2. Translation

‘This book, the Prophets, is a dedication to the LORD God of Is[rael]. The Great Prince David b. the Great Prince Yefet, known as the Alexandrian, dedicated it, after its redemption, to the congregation of the Karaites, for them to read it on the days of Sabbaths and Fasts in the synagogue of Cairo—may it be rebuilt and re-established. And if he or one of his descendants is in attendance, let the beadle set it before him. And no authority is granted to anyone to take it out of the synagogue, except—God forbid—out of need, and let him then return it at a time of quiet. And whoever alters this condition or this dedication is cursed by God, and all curses shall stick to him. And whoever preserves it, and whoever reads it, and whoever returns it to its place after turmoil—he is blessed in the name of the LORD, and all blessings, and a bountiful reward, and wellbeing will be upon his head and

upon the head of the one who dedicates, the Prince David and his descendants, until the end of all generations and all Israel.’

9.3. Notes

1. זה הספר הנביאים ‘This book, the Prophets’. Both Kahle (1959, 95) and Avrin (1974, 17) translate it so, with הנביאים in apposition to זה הספר. It is feasible, however, especially in later medieval and early modern Hebrew to find a doubly definite construction, and so we might translate it ‘This book of the Prophets’.

2–3. אחרי גאולתו ‘After its redemption’ is the phrase that has sparked the imagination of many scholars.

3–4. על עדת בני מקרא ‘for the congregation of the Karaites’

5–6. לקראת בו ‘to read from it’, using the hybrid form of the infinitive construct of קרא, as found in the Bible at Judg. 8.1.

7. בתב' ותב' 'in the synagogue of Cairo—may it be rebuilt and re-established'. Avrin (1974, 17–18) does not comment on this oddity, and Kahle (1959, 95) does a bit of creative reading between the lines to avoid the problem, translating it thus: “in the Synagogue in Cairo—may it (the city of Jerusalem) be built up and established.” But this goes too far. No such parenthesising is required if we recognise that the colophon need not be referring to Jerusalem at all. Instead, we should be looking at why the Karaite synagogue in Cairo required rebuilding.

11. לצורך ‘out of need’. Kahle (1959, 95) translates “except it is done ... by compulsion.” The intent is to prevent it leaving except if it is necessary to preserve it, such as if the synagogue building itself is endangered. Kahle’s “in the time of appeasement” for

בעת השקט (בעת is written over what looks like possibly an original [בשע] is a poor translation: the intention is that the book should be returned when things have returned to normal, when peace reigns again in the community. Avrin (1974, 17) has “out of compulsion” and “in the time of tranquillity,” but again, ‘compulsion’ is not really the sense imparted by צורך. When this colophon was written, under the Mamluks, *dimmi* places of prayer and worship were under real threats of closure, confiscation, or destruction, and consequently this clause allowed for the safe removal of *heqdesh* property as an exception to the strict terms of its dedication.

20. יהיו על ראשו ‘will be upon his head’. It looks like the text originally had יחולו ‘may they rest upon his head’ (like 2 Sam. 3.29 and elsewhere), which can be found in similar contexts, not least in the Jabez b. Solomon ownership colophon in C (fol. 576 lns 14–16) and all the blessings... יחולו על ראשו (14–16) ‘and all the blessings... rest upon his head’.²⁷

This is a key colophon for the story of the codex’s significance and survival, specifically the phrase גאולתו אחרי גאולתו ‘after its redemption’.²⁸ Kahle was the first to present this tale in full, but

²⁷ It occurs in Medieval Hebrew letters as a blessing on the recipient, e.g., Cambridge University Library T-S 12.179 (Outhwaite 2009, 183–88), an early eleventh-century letter from Egypt, כלם יחולו על ראש כב' ג' 'קדש' מר' ור' אהרן 'May all of them rest upon the head of the honourable, great, holy, our master and teacher Aaron'. However, it appears to have been changed here in this colophon (by the same or a very similar hand) to the more mundane יהיו ‘they will be [on his head]’.

²⁸ There is another David b. Yefet colophon, but it is so fragmentary and hard to read in the photographs, and it is so similar to the others in

it has been repeated and expanded by Avrin, Dukan, Sirat, and so on: the book was redeemed from the Crusaders. But a tremendous leap needs to be taken to read it this way. This colophon, palaeographically and stylistically, is later by at least two centuries than the First Crusade's capture of the Holy Land in 1099 CE, which is the only occasion when we are aware of the Franks seizing Jewish books for ransom. If this refers to that event, then it is either passing down a very long-established legend associated with the book, since no other evidence in it suggests this occurrence or, as is far more likely, the reference has nothing to do with the Crusader seizure of books.²⁹ If, instead, we look at other details of the dedication—the references to the rebuilding and to the removal of books in times of 'need'—then we can posit two more likely explanations. The first is that the story of the Aleppo Codex had become associated in the Mamluk era with this Ben

language and detail, that I exclude it here in the interests of keeping this article at a reasonably readable length. It is in the same hand as the other David colophons and is found at the top of fol. 4 (Avrin's numbering), on the carpet page with interlocked quatrefoil decorations. It adds nothing to the information we glean from the other David b. Yefet dedications.

²⁹ In theory we could posit a connection with the Crusader capture of Bilbays in 1163 CE, but this is still two centuries before the colophon could have been written, and we have no evidence of books being ransomed then (only people). Nor does the codex show any evidence of having been anywhere but Cairo or, if one is to believe Jabez b. Solomon's dedication colophons, Jerusalem. Alternatively, we could consider the Crusader expedition against Alexandria in 1365 CE, which would be closer in time, but again we lack any evidence for this.

Asher codex instead. Important Bible codices do acquire a lustre beyond what the bare facts reveal, and a blurring of legends between the great Ben Asher codices is credible. On the other hand, a more satisfying explanation rooted in the historical context is possible. The colophon references the rebuilding of the Cairo Synagogue and has an exceptional clause for removing the codex in case of 'need'. Both these facts point to the difficult situation in which the Jewish community sometimes found itself in the Mamluk era, particularly in the fifteenth century under the reign of the sultan Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq. On a number of occasions, synagogues (and churches) were closed, confiscated or destroyed by the Mamluk government, for what the authorities regarded as infractions of the restrictions on the *ḍimmī* established by Islamic law and custom (Ashtor 1944, II:100–5; Cohen 1984, 425–48). In 1442, for example, part of the Rabbanite synagogue in Fuṣṭāṭ was ordered destroyed for blasphemous inscriptions (Cohen 1984, 425–30), and scrutiny, closure, and confiscation of the synagogues in Cairo followed, including buildings belonging to the Karaite community (Ashtor 1944, II:101–2). A particular problem was the rebuilding of synagogues that had fallen into disrepair (which was tantamount to building new places of *ḍimmī* worship, forbidden in the Mamluks' interpretation of Islamic law), and the authorities sometimes tore down the renovations that had been carried out (Ashtor 1944, II:104–5). It is against this background that we can read the reference to the 'rebuilding' of the synagogue—perhaps more a 'renovation'. Though we have no specific details about the loss of books, it is possible that the 'redemption' of the codex occurred during one of these periods,

when a school, synagogue, or prayer hall was locked up or confiscated, together with its library of books. While this can only be, in our current state of knowledge, supposition, it is a supposition that better fits the historical context of these David b. Yefet colophons and requires no great imaginative leaps across centuries.

What, though, about the certainty with which even recent authors like Dukan have stated that the book was redeemed from Jerusalem in 1129–1130 CE? That date comes from a repair colophon found alongside Jabez dedication colophons 3 and 4.

10.0. Repair Colophon

This colophon noting the patron who repaired the book is written beneath dedication colophon 4, on fol. 584.

10.1. Text

1. זה המצחף בלה מקצת כסויו ונקרע וחזקוהו ממ[מון]
2. הזקן הנכבד אלעזר הלוי בן הזקן היקר עדיה הלוי אשר
3. התנדב ברוח נדיבה לעשותו וזולתו בשנה אתמ[א]
4. האלהים יכפיל שכרו

10.2. Translation

‘This Bible codex—its cover was a little worn and torn, and they strengthened it with the money that the honoured elder Eliezer ha-Levi b. the dear elder Adaiah ha-Levi provided in a spirit of

generosity, to do this one and another one besides,³⁰ in the year 144[1]. God double his reward.'

10.3. Notes

This colophon is dated 1441, which, if taken as a Seleucid-era date, would equate to 1129–1130 CE. Gottheil, who saw the manuscript in person, read אַתְּמִ'ג, 1443 = 1131–1132 CE. The difference is minimal, though he interpreted it as 1684 CE (Gottheil 1905, 640–41). Avrin (1974, 21) points out that if the Era of Destruction is referred to, then it could be around 1509 CE, and she says that this is as likely as the Seleucid dating.³¹ The hand is not a sixteenth-century scribe's, and so the Era of Documents (the Seleucid Era) can be assumed—as we sometimes find when the system of dating is not explicitly mentioned.³² This dated colophon serves the useful purpose of providing a *terminus ante quem* for the production of the volume (if we disregard the date given

³⁰ Avrin (1974, 21) translates “to restore it at his own expense,” but זולתו, a common medieval expression, has the meaning ‘and another one except for this one’.

³¹ It is not. Seleucid dating is the dominant form of dating in the twelfth century.

³² For instance, in the colophon of the oldest dated biblical codex (or the remnants of it), Cambridge University Library T-S NS 246.26.2, which is dated בשנת אלפא ומתן וחמש עשר שנים ‘in the year one thousand two hundred and fifteen’, assumed to be a Seleucid date and, therefore, 903–904 CE; see Outhwaite (2010).

in the Moses b. Asher colophon), since the ownership and dedication colophons all lack dates.³³

At this stage, and without access to the manuscript, we can only really take the repair colophon in Codex C at face value, and the hand certainly appears authentic. It gives us a date of 1129–1130 CE, which does not clash with the historical background of the production of the book, which is likely in the preceding century (Yeivin 2011, 18). More than fifty years later, it might well have needed repair. What is questionable, however, is how this can, with such certainty, be used to date its redemption, with such confidence as Dukan and others state, “La second consecration est de 1129/30” (Dukan 2006, 299). It cannot. It is just a date in the codex that those over-enthusiastic in their eagerness to embellish the history of the book have embraced. All we can really say is, if the repair colophon is genuine, then the book was

³³ It is most interesting that this repair colophon has a parallel in another eastern biblical manuscript, RNL Firkovich Evr. II B34, a copy of the Writings. There, underneath an (in my opinion, highly suspect) undated dedication colophon, which leaves the book to the Karaites, there is an almost identical note of the repair of the volume, by the same donor as in Codex C. The hand is very similar, though in the Firkovich manuscript האלהים is written with a ligatured *alef-lamed*, and it concludes with אמן. The date reads אקמ'א, 1141, which would equate to 829–830 CE. Kahle (1927, 75) states that “Firkowitsch hat auch hier wieder das Datum gefälscht” (‘Firkovich had also here again falsified the date’, my translation), changing the נ to a ק. This is certainly possible, though I wonder if it is not just as likely that the whole colophon in B34 is false.

repaired in the twelfth century. There is no reason at all to connect it with the redemption of the book, and especially not with the Crusaders.

11.0. Conclusion

So, where does this leave the history of this codex? What can we say for sure, especially given that the unknown whereabouts of the manuscript and its consequent unavailability for analysis?

I think we can really only reliably say the following at this stage:

1. The codex was commissioned by Jabez b. Solomon (ownership colophon), who was of Babylonian heritage.
2. The codex was dedicated to the Karaite synagogue in Cairo sometime in the fifteenth century (probably), by a dignitary, David b. Yefet.

To this we can add that the codex was probably produced in the eleventh century, thanks to the C14 analysis carried out on a piece of it (Yeivin 2011, 18), and, given the lack of any reliable information to the contrary, it was probably produced in Egypt and remained there until recently.

Of course, that leaves out of the picture a fair amount of information from the Jabez b. Solomon dedication colophons, but I believe that we cannot rely on any of them as authentic records of a dedication of the codex. While the dedications draw on information from the ownership colophon, they betray stylistic incongruities that strongly suggest they are later additions and not genuine medieval colophons, in particular in their addition of new information about the donor, his creed and his intentions.

Considering also the irregularities in language, in the use of the Tetragrammaton, in phrasing that is shared with other colophons of dubious antiquity, and in their overwhelming need to demonstrate the Karaite character of the donor and donation, they do not inspire confidence. In particular, a number of details stand out:

1. There are three lengthy dedication colophons all describing the donation by Jabez b. Solomon in similar, but not identical terms, suggesting that the book may have already been in pieces when some or all were added. Such duplication of lengthy colophons like this is very unusual.
2. Jabez dedication number 2 is written alongside the *Seder Miqra* (fol. 572), rather than where it would have been natural to put it, and where there would have been more than enough space for it, on the preceding folio (fol. 571) at the end of the text of Malachi. Why? Because, I believe, this space was already occupied by the David b. Yefet dedication. Though ostensibly centuries later, this in fact strongly suggests that the Jabez dedication was written into the book after the Mamluk-era David dedication.
3. The additional text to Jabez b. Solomon dedication number 2 is not recorded by Jacob Saphir, who would have seen it in the 1850s, and who was assiduous in copying the colophons. The hand that added it to the codex is the same hand that has added קדש ליהוה notes with their unusual additions about “not to be removed from the compound of Jabez b. Solomon” at intervals throughout the manuscript. These unusual notes are similar in style to

those added to the tops of several leaves in RNL Firkovich Evr. II B10, the ‘Tustarī Bible’, which are believed to have been added by Abraham Firkovich to improve the Karaite character of that book (Mann 1920–1922, I:79–80).

So, how to explain this situation? Given the current state of knowledge and without access to the book itself, we cannot be sure. I faced a similar situation with Cairo Codex 3, some of whose colophons arouse similar suspicions on an otherwise beautiful and important manuscript. I think there is little doubt that access to the book and analysis, for instance, of the inks, would enable us to say more about the authenticity of the different colophons in Codex C, but for now we need to be careful. I have indicated above what I believe we can say with certainty. And I have also been clear about what I believe is scholarly embellishment, caused by an enthusiasm to join dots and read between lines. For now, I think there are sufficient reasons to be suspicious of all the dedication colophons relating to the codex’s supposed dedication in Jerusalem by Jabez b. Solomon—on stylistic, linguistic, and historical grounds. These appear designed to give the book a greater status, like that of the Aleppo Codex, by placing it as a Karaite public possession in Jerusalem. The David b. Yefet colophons have a much greater appearance of authenticity, but in giving the book as holy property to the synagogue in Cairo, there would evidently have been a clash with the other dedication notes scattered throughout the book, and no attempt was made, it seems, to alter or erase these to reflect the new circumstance. That in itself should be suspicious, and leads me to believe that the Jabez b. Solomon dedications were added after the David

b. Yefet dedications (something that the curious placement of Jabez dedication number 2 also suggests). The handwriting of the Jabez dedications cannot alone be taken as a sign of their relative antiquity. The known forgeries of colophons in RNL Firkovich Evr. II B12 (Ofer 2020) and B188 (Penkower 1991), for instance, both show clear attempts to write in a medieval-style hand.

Was Firkovich responsible for any of this? The colophon clumsily forged in RNL Firkovich Evr. II B188, almost certainly by Firkovich himself, draws on the ownership and scribal colophons of Codex C:

Holy to the LORD God of Israel to (על) the community of the Karaites (בני מקרא) here [in] the city of Ramla (פה ק') who keep the festivals of the LORD according to the sighting of the moon and the observation of the barley in the Holy Land (השמרים את מעדי יהוה על ראית הירח ומציאת), is this Torah which Rabbenu Moses b. (אביב בארץ הקדש sic!) Asher b. (sic! ב'ר') Moses—his rest be peaceful—in the name of Jabez b. Solomon who is dedicating it to-day....³⁴

Though the hand could pass as medieval, the inauthentic syntax, erroneous spelling (רמלא instead of רמלה), and the spelling out of the Karaite creed are all telltale signs of numerous forgeries that can be found among Firkovich's manuscripts. Telling too is how he takes authentic details—two named individuals from another

³⁴ Penkower (1991) exposes the forgery through an analysis of the supposed historical facts and the character of the biblical text, but does not really tackle the inauthentic nature of the colophon's language itself. Yet it is the dubious character of the supposedly medieval Hebrew that should give rise to suspicion; see Outhwaite (2023, 398 fn. 24).

codex—and reworks them in a new setting. This is a cunning feature of his forgeries, which allows them (when not done so ahistorically, as here) to appear authentic. Moreover, and particularly relevant to the case of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, he was not above making alterations to the colophons of manuscripts that he himself did not own. This he certainly did to the Miqdash Yah Bible he saw in the Karaite synagogue in Jerusalem, as Y. Ofer has shown, adding a version of the Aleppo Codex's colophon and underlining its Karaite affiliation (Ofer 2005).

A study of Firkovich's travels in the Middle East, his diaries, and letters may throw light on the opportunities that he had to consult Codex C, and perhaps we shall be able to determine at what point some of the notes might have been added to it, and the degree to which 'pious fraud' has been perpetrated on it. Certainly, if the codex itself were to emerge into the light, then we should be in a better position to examine the strength of my suspicions. For now, though, I strongly recommend maintaining a healthy scepticism about the medieval history of this book and we should not, like Kahle, further confuse matters by filling in the gaps with fanciful elaboration. Codex C's plethora of colophons presents a perplexing puzzle; they should not all be taken at face value.

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DOES THE CAIRO CODEX REPRESENT A SCRIBAL SCHOOL?*

Vincent D. Beiler

Few Hebrew Bible codices have been subjected to as many questions regarding authenticity and date of composition as the Cairo Codex of the Prophets. While the consensus is (possibly) that the codex was written during the eleventh century (e.g., Glatzer 1989; Penkower 1990; Beit-Arié, Sirat, and Glatzer 1997; Sirat 2002), an opinion partially based upon carbon-14 dating,¹ some scholars hold that the colophon is genuine and the carbon-14 date is questionable—thus dating the codex to the end of the ninth century (cf. Martín-Contreras 2018, 618 fn. 62).²

* To Geoffrey Khan, with deepest gratitude for his generosity, encouragement, and advice.

¹ The carbon-14 dating is based upon a fragment of the manuscript recovered via floor sweeping in the 1980s, but not analysed until the 1990s (Malachi Beit-Arié, personal correspondence, 16 June 2022).

² The most relevant parts of the colophon read: אני משה בן אשר כתבתי זה ... המחזור שלמקרא ... במדינת מעזיה טבריה נכתב לקץ שמונה מאות שנה ועשרים ... 'I, Moses b. Asher wrote this codex of the Bible [i.e., the Prophets]... in the city of Tiberias.... It was written in the year 827 since the destruction of the Second Temple [ca 895 CE]’.

For the last several decades, the status of the Cairo Codex has been officially indeterminate (presumably well-kept, but in an undisclosed location), preventing further chemical analysis from being done—which could, one would think, resolve the debate over its colophon’s age, and consequently clarify its authenticity. Barring a breakthrough on this front, which appears unlikely in the foreseeable future, there seems to be little chance of making firm progress. But, sometimes help for an otherwise difficult problem—or, at least, the means for making a more informed decision—can come from a different quarter. Here I refer to the study of paratextual features found in the Cairo Codex (hereafter, C) that are not universally characteristic of model Bible codices available to us from the earliest period (tenth–twelfth centuries).³ If a cluster of features found in C can also be found in a subset of Oriental Bible codices, one could (theoretically, at least) establish a scribal school for C.⁴ While this would neither

³ Characteristic features of ‘model’ Bible codices of the period include a three-column format, square Oriental script, large leaf size (cf. Dukan 2006, 191–92), full vocalisation and accents, and full Masora. These ‘model’ Bibles appear to be the most expensive Hebrew Bibles produced in the tenth–twelfth centuries, e.g., the Leningrad Codex and C.

⁴ ‘School’ can be a loaded term. One should note that by ‘school’ I do *not* mean scriptorium (i.e., a mini-factory of standardised book production), but merely the apparent preference for one layout model over another. This may be considered roughly analogous to academics who work within the paradigm(s) of a respected guild member and are said to be part of his/her ‘school’: to wit, the influence is obvious, but the borrowing is voluntary. For more on the book production of Hebrew

prove nor disprove the validity of C's colophon, it would provide scholars with the means for making a more informed decision on the matter, at least regarding the putative connection with the scribal tradition and Masoretes that produced the Aleppo Codex.

Before examining paratextual features of Bible codices for similarities, it should be noted that early Oriental (or Eastern⁵) square-script manuscripts, a group to which practically all early Hebrew codices belong, are commonly considered an undifferentiated group (e.g., Beit-Arié, Engel, and Yardeni 1987; Yardeni 1997–2010). Olszowy-Schlanger (2015) has identified a small group of non-biblical manuscripts she refers to as South-Western (*Sud-Ouest*) Oriental, and Engel (2013) divides early Bible manuscripts into categories of 'proto-square script' and 'square script'. Yet these efforts, while important, have only limited bearing on model three-column Bible codices—all of which are generally referred to simply as Oriental, or, in keeping with Olszowy-Schlanger's classification, as North-Eastern Oriental.

To the best of my knowledge, the nearest anyone has come to further subdividing the Oriental corpus of model Bibles is Penkower (2021, 160–61), in a recent article on the Washington Pentateuch (WP), where seven comparisons are made between WP

scribes, particularly the solitary nature of the work, see Olszowy-Schlanger (2012, 31–33) and Beit-Arié (2014, 17–28).

⁵ The term 'Oriental' is perhaps not felicitous (see already Goshen-Gottstein 1962, 37 fn. 9), but at least the zone in question is unambiguous. The term 'Eastern' can be misleading: in academic usage, sometimes 'Eastern' refers to points east of the Land of Israel only.

and C (see also Beit-Arié, Sirat, and Glatzer 1997, 10–11).⁶ Penkower notes that both WP and C have a thicker script than that which is found in most other early codices. This description of script alongside a cluster of accompanying paratextual features is striking enough to warrant a closer look.

Thus, the goals of the present paper are straightforward: first, identify scripts of early codices that appear similar to those of C and WP (essentially a thick script, particularly the horizontal strokes; the vertical strokes can be somewhat thinner) and, second, probe these manuscripts for paratextual similarities as noted by Penkower. Four scribal practices not mentioned by Penkower will also be examined (below, §§5.0–7.0 and 9.0).

1.0. Manuscripts with a ‘Thick Script’

While making no claim of exhaustiveness, the following nineteen early, three-column Bible codices represent substantive examples of manuscripts that display the ‘thick script’:⁷

⁶ Penkower, in turn, derived his comparison of WP and C from some brief remarks on the similarity found in Beit-Arié, Sirat, and Glatzer (1997, 10–11), where the visual similarity of the two codices with II B 116 is acknowledged.

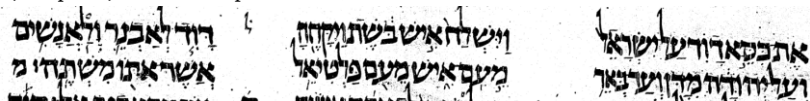
⁷ While many examples can also be found among Cairo Geniza manuscripts (e.g., CUL T-S A2.25, CUL T-S A2.33, CUL T-S A8.4, CUL T-S AS 18.149), these manuscripts are generally only a leaf or two in length, and thus too short to yield wholly satisfactory data.

Table 1: Nineteen Bibles characterised by ‘thick script’⁸

Gottheil 18/C3,⁹ Torah, ca 580 leaves



C, Prophets, 308 leaves (p. 130/147)¹⁰



⁸ After completion of the research that led to this paper, it was discovered that II B 1150 and II B 1283 are part of the same codex. Despite this, to prevent the introduction of errors, the two classmarks are treated separately throughout.

‘St Petersburg EVR’ should be understood as preceding all manuscripts that contain ‘II B’ as part of their classmark. Apart from Tables 1 and 2, however, ‘St Petersburg EVR’ is not included for reasons of space.

⁹ Gottheil manuscripts are those which follow the numbering system found in Gottheil’s frequently cited article ‘Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo’ (1905).

¹⁰ In this paper, page numbers in C are given in sets of two. The first, smaller number is the handwritten number found on the page of the manuscript itself; the second number is the image number in the set of images available to me. There are no folio numbers for C, although each page contains either a 1 or a 2 to indicate recto and verso; this r/v distinction is sometimes misinterpreted, taken in conjunction with the handwritten page number, supposing the page number to be a folio number, which it is *not*.

WP, Torah, 247 leaves (fol. 65r)¹¹



St Petersburg EVR II B 19, Torah, 256 leaves (p. 12)



St Petersburg EVR II B 20, Torah, 154 leaves (p. 101)¹²



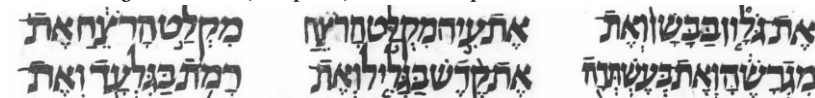
St Petersburg EVR II B 24, Former Prophets, ca 158 leaves (p. 17)¹³



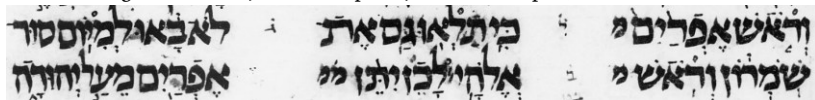
St Petersburg EVR II B 46, Torah, 167 leaves (p. 9)



St Petersburg EVR II B 50, Prophets, 365 leaves (p. 11)



St Petersburg EVR II B 57, Latter Prophets, 206 leaves (p. 5)



¹¹ There are three hands that comprise WP; only the earliest hand (ca 1000 CE) is examined here.

¹² Pp. 147–48 belong elsewhere.

¹³ Pp. 4–5 belong elsewhere.

St Petersburg EVR II B 110, Former Prophets, 36 leaves (p. 11)

וּבְחֹרֵן גִּלְמֵנֵעַ מִ
הַחֲרִיד וְיִשְׁכּוּ מִ
גִּלְמֵנֵעַ כִּלְהֵמֶנֶה
וְדָנֵה הָעִיר וְאֵת
קִינֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וְאֵת

St Petersburg EVR II B 116, Latter Prophets, 51 leaves (p. 18)

כְּאֵשׁ וְנִמְסוּ הָרִים
מִדְּמָם וְנִמְקוּ כָּל
בֹּתְרָנָם בְּלִפְיָם
אֲבִירִים וְדוֹתָהּ
אֲרֵעַנָּם מִסִּוְעָתָהּ

St Petersburg EVR II B 1021, Torah, 13 leaves (p. 9)

וְאִמְרוּ הִזֵּנוּ אֶל־מִשְׁחָה
לֹא־מִי וְשֵׁאֱתָרָאשׁ
מִזֶּה־בְּקֶרֶם מִזֶּה־חֲמוּמִים
הַחֲמִשִּׁים מִזֶּה־אָרֶם
חֶלֶק חֵי־נֹאִים בְּנֵי־אֵל
מִסֵּפֶר הָעֵצִים שְׁלֹשׁ

St Petersburg EVR II B 1150, Latter Prophets, 37 leaves (p. 5)

וְאִנִּי אֶעֱדֶה עִדִּי הֵם
מִדְּבָרִים וְאִנִּי אֶשְׁמַע
וְכִשְׁקוּעֵיהֶם נִשְׁמָע
הֵמָּה בְּחֹרֵן בְּרִיכֹתָם
מִי־רָאָה בְּאֵלֵהֶם חֵי־חַיִּים
אֲרֵץ פִּיּוֹס אֲחֵרָה אִם

St Petersburg EVR II B 1185, Former Prophets, 10 leaves (p. 15)

וְהִיא בְּתִמְשָׁכָם
אֶת־הַעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
וְיִשְׁוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ נֶגֶד
אֲשֶׁר־אֵתָּנוּ עַל־
אֲנֹשֵׁי הָעִיר וְדָם
יִשְׂרָאֵל לִמְדוֹן

St Petersburg EVR II B 1283, Latter Prophets, 31 leaves (alternate microfilm, p. 5)

לֹא־אִמְרֵי עִדִּי שְׁמָמָה
כִּי־לִי יִקְרָא חֲפֵצִי בָּהּ
וְאֶכְלֶה וְהִלְלוּ יְיָ אֵת
וְעַתָּה כִּי־מֵאֲסָפוֹ
מִדְּנֵעַ אֲרִים לִלְבוֹשׁ
וּבְגָדִי כִדְרוֹ בָּגֶד

St Petersburg EVR II B 1284, Writings, 17 leaves (p. 28)

וְיָקֵם עוֹלָא וְיִשְׁבַּע
אֶת־שְׂרֵי־הַכְּתָבִים חֲתוּמִים
וּמִהַגְשָׁמִים וְיָקֵם
מִדְּעִירִים עַל־דְּבָרָם
וְעִמָּחִים וְקִנְיָנֵי עִיר
וְשִׁפְטֵי עִיר וְשִׁבְחָהּ

St Petersburg EVR II B 1341, Latter Prophets, 19 leaves (p. 14)

עֵינֵתָם עָלַי לִמָּוֶת
יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲנִנִי מִבְּיָא
יָחוּז עֲבֹאֲתָאֵלֶּהּ
לְמִקְדָּשׁ הָחוּז עוֹד
יָחוּז מִדְּעַת אֲתָבֶךָ
יָחוּז וְלֹא־יִקְרָא

St Petersburg EVR II B 1356, Latter Prophets, 21 leaves (p. 11)

לֶחֶם יוֹדֵק כִּי־לֹא־
יָחוּז כִּכְמֵן בְּשִׁבְטֵי
וּמִעַפְרָא מִרְתָּהּ מִ
יָחוּז כִּכְמֵן אֲרֵץ־קוֹדֶה
הַעֲבָאִים עַל־הָרֵי־עִינִין
כִּי־יָחוּז הַחֲמוּזִים בְּלִפְיָם

St Petersburg EVR II B 1396, Former Prophets, 19 leaves (p. 21)

וְיֹאמְרוּ הִנֵּה חֲכִי
יִשְׁעוֹר אֲשֶׁר־גִּ
חֲמִלָה אִפְחָהּ הוּא
רָגִלִים וְיֹאמְרוּ לוֹ
אֶעֱשֶׂה עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד
בְּעֶבֶר וְחֹנָתָן

The scripts of the above nineteen manuscripts may be contrasted with other early codices without the ‘thick script’. (To fully appreciate the script differences, a full-page examination of each manuscript is recommended. Images of entire leaves could not be provided due to space restrictions.)

Table 2: Seven Oriental manuscripts not characterised by ‘thick script’

Aleppo Codex (fol. 1r)			
JER NLI 5702 = 24/Sassoon 507 (p. 9)			
BL Or.4445 (fol. 41v)			
Leningrad Codex/St Petersburg I Bibl. 19a (fol. 436v)			
Sassoon 1053 (p. 513)			
St Petersburg EVR II B 9 (p. 266)			
St Petersburg EVR II B 10 (p. 190, right side)			

As can be readily observed, the letter shapes of the ‘thick script’ manuscripts are largely similar to those in the manuscripts not possessing the thicker lettering, i.e., both groups are undoubtedly North-Eastern Oriental (cf. Olszowy-Schlanger 2015). The chief

difference appears to be the cut of the calamus.¹⁴ It remains to be seen if this apparently simple difference is sufficient to warrant separate classification—a question that will be investigated in the following sections.

2.0. Separate Columns for Separate Bible Books

According to b. Sofrim 2.4, scribes were to leave four blank lines to mark division between books of the Torah and three blank lines to separate books of the Prophets. This implies, in essence, that a Bible book could conclude anywhere on the page, the scribe being obliged merely to drop down the required number of lines before beginning the next book. This spacing practice can be seen, for example, in the Aleppo Codex, II B 55, II B 60, and II B 96. Other similar codices include II B 65 (2.5 blank lines) and the Leningrad Codex (sometimes fewer than four blank lines in the Torah, but often four lines in the Prophets). Whatever the precise number of lines, a small white space equal to the span of several lines seems to be the typical spacing practice in most early Bible codices.

Not all scribes were content to conclude a Bible book at random, however, some preferring to make various adjustments so that a new Bible book would begin at the head of a column. In these instances, one book would conclude at the approximate foot of a column, followed by a column left entirely blank, which was then followed by a column headed with the first words of

¹⁴ Pace Penkower (2021, 161), who seems to suggest that C and WP are somehow different in letter shape from other early codices.

the next Bible book (see also Penkower 2021, 160). These two types of spacing practice can be seen in the following images.

Table 3: Space between Bible books

Or. 4445, fol. 85r	IIB 50, p. 385
	

In places where the conclusion of a Bible book ended especially poorly (i.e., there was little text remaining to complete the final column), sometimes the final column was truncated, effectively eliminating the visual ‘need’ for a column of separation between Bible books (e.g., C between Joshua and Judges; II B 1150, between Isaiah and Jeremiah; see Image 1, facing page). In other instances, the arrangement allowed for carpet-page-style ornamentation between each Bible book (e.g., Gottheil 18), which appears to be an elaboration on the general aesthetic of leaving large amounts of space between Bible books.

Image 1: Truncated final column of text (II B 1150, p. 7)



Using separate columns for separate Bible books is the only practice observed in the current corpus of nineteen manuscripts.¹⁵ Four manuscripts are not preserved at the necessary points (II B 116, II B 1185, II B 1341, II B 1356). The remaining fifteen manuscripts, without exception, use separate columns for separate Bible books.

3.0. Marginal *nun/zayin*

In a minority of early codices, a large letter resembling *zayin* or final *nun* appears in the margin along with the *masora parva*, gen-

¹⁵ Exception should be made for two situations. (1) Books of the Minor Prophets are never separated by more than several lines (e.g., II B 57, p. 374). (2) When in a two-column layout, books of the Writings are only separated by several lines (e.g., II B 1284, p. 7).

erally in conjunction with *qere/ketiv* (Himbaza 2000; Martín-Contreras 2015; Beiler 2022; see also Penkower 2019). Notably, while the letter may occur regularly in some codices, its occurrence is infrequent—at best—in other codices. The letter occurs in neither Or. 4445 nor the Aleppo Codex, for example, and only sporadically in the Leningrad Codex (with one exception, the letter is found only in the Writings). While the letter could theoretically have been added to any codex, the fact that it tends to occur in certain script types more than others seems to indicate a regional difference (Beiler 2022).

In the present manuscripts, selected for their similarity of script alone, it is noteworthy that all manuscripts, excepting II B 46, contain the marginal letter, providing another indication that the script similarity is more than incidental. The results are tabulated below.

Table 4: Corpus manuscripts and the large marginal letter

Manuscript	Contains letter?	Occurrences of letter/total # of <i>qere</i> notations observed	Number of pp. consulted ¹⁶
C	Yes	28/35	1st 32 pp.
Gottheil 18	Yes	5/10	1st 132 pp.
WP	Yes	20/27	Ca 100 pp.
II B 19	Yes ¹⁷	3/40	1st 54 pp.
II B 20	Yes	15/20	Entire MS (310 pp.)
II B 24	Yes	20/33	1st 65 pp. ¹⁸
II B 46	No	0/28	Entire MS (334 pp.)
II B 50	Yes	21/31	1st 82 pp.
II B 57	Yes	6/10	1st 40 pp.
II B 110	Yes	31/35	1st 40 pp.
II B 116	Yes	21/28	1st 62 pp.
II B 1021	Yes	3/3	Entire MS (26 pp.)
II B 1150	Yes	20/30	1st 20 pp.
II B 1185	Yes	4/4	Entire MS (20 pp.)
II B 1283	Yes	42/53	Entire MS (62 pp.)
II B 1284	Yes	19/67	Entire MS (34 pp.)
II B 1341	Yes	28/38	Entire MS (38 pp.)
II B 1356	Yes	16/31	Entire MS (42 pp.)
II B 1396	Yes	18/20	Entire MS (38 pp.)

¹⁶ Low quality images and partially preserved leaves render the number of instances observed as approximate both here and throughout. These small discrepancies have no effect on the broader outcome of the paper.

¹⁷ The lower incidence of the marginal letter in II B 19 is attributable, in part, to the Masorete's careful insistence to record instances of וָיִן in the Torah as *qere*, e.g., וָיִן 'read with *yod* [in place of *waw*]'. Such *qere* notes are *not* accompanied by the marginal letter, reducing its apparent frequency.

¹⁸ II B 24, pp. 4–5, are excluded from the count.

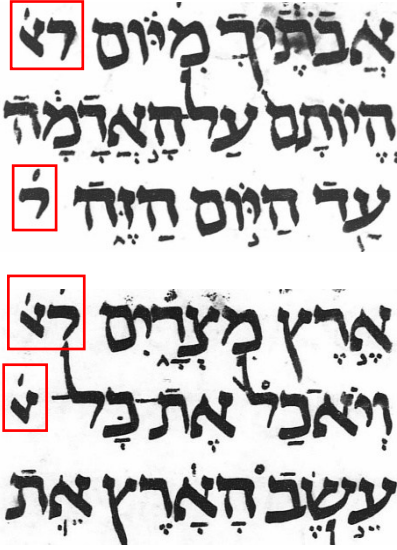

4.0. Left-Justification

One consistent feature of early Oriental Bibles is the general reticence to left-justify a column through the use of extreme letter elongation, as became popular among Sephardi scribes from the thirteenth century onwards. Instead, Oriental scribes employed a variety of filler markings to left-justify a column, and kept letter elongation at a minimum.¹⁹

Because left-justification choices needed to be made at the end of every line, certain types tend to reoccur within a codex or group of similar codices. One especially prevalent method among Oriental scribes involved the use of partial letters, especially partial *lamed* and *'alef*, as can be seen in the following table (facing page; note also the presence of several dots/wedges).

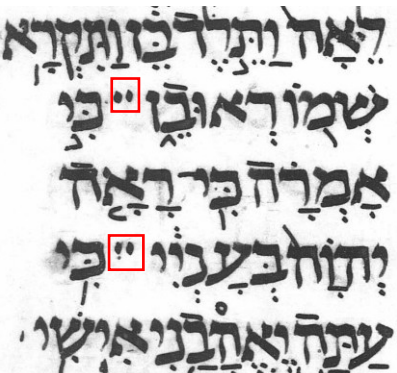
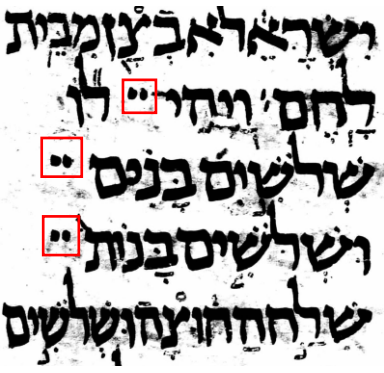
¹⁹ Occasional letter elongation can be seen, for example, in the early II B 159 (943 CE), II B 8 (early eleventh century), and Sassoon 1053 (early tenth century); frequent letter elongation occurs in II B 162 (not all leaves by the same scribe). These instances are exceptions to the general rule.

Table 5: Left-justification with partial *lamed* and *ʿalef*

II B 17 (p. 142)	II B 26 (p. 31)
	

Other scribes relied on dots, especially double sets of dots.

Table 6: Two dots prior or following final word of the line

II B 80 (p. 10)	II B 99 (p. 26)
	

Finally, some early Oriental codices use the incipient words of the following line (see Table 7, overleaf).

Table 7: Incipient words in JER NLI 5702 = 24 (Sassoon 507)



While the above means of left-justification are broadly typical of Oriental Bible codices, is there a distinctive left-justification method in the present corpus? In general, the present manuscripts utilise all of the aforementioned strategies for left-justification; however, the practice of using partial *lamed* and *'alef* is less pronounced. This difference may be attributable, in part, to the introduction of another left-justification strategy: that of using full letters, such as *mem*, *peh*, and *bet*, in instances where the aforementioned letters are not incipient to the following line. In particular, the practice of using a fully formed *mem*, albeit sometimes of reduced size (e.g., II B 20) is a feature shared by most of the present corpus (seventeen manuscripts). The tendency to fall back on *mem* is especially pronounced in some examples, where the scribe fills entire sections of otherwise white space with these superfluous *mems* (e.g., II B 19, p. 217; II B 24, p. 134; II B 50, p. 407—note that II B 24 alternately employs a full line of partial *'alefs* on p. 178). The use of *mem* to left-justify in these manuscripts is sometimes a dominant method (e.g., C, Gottheil 18, WP, II B 19, II B 20, II B 57, II B 110, II B 116, II B 1021, II B 1341, II B 1396), whereas sometimes other methods predominate (e.g., II B 24, II B 50, II B 1150, II B 1283, II B 1284, II B 1356). Crucially, however, all the aforementioned include a complete *mem*, a practice not seen in most codices of the tenth–twelfth centuries.

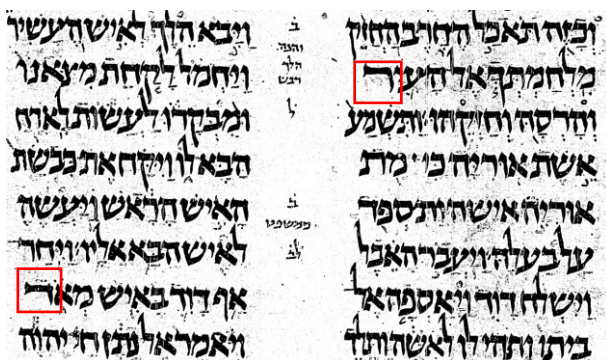
Image 2: Complete *mem* for left justification (II B 57, p. 28)

Noted exceptions to the above are II B 46 and II B 1185, as neither manuscript seems to use *mem* for left-justification; somewhat similar is II B 1150, where the use of a full *mem*, although present (e.g., pp. 45, 46, 50, 58), remains a relatively infrequent left-justification method.

Another means of left-justification that can be seen in the present corpus to a much greater degree than in 'typical' Oriental codices is the use of slight letter elongation. In the current manuscripts, the letters may be slightly dilated. This practice can be

seen in sixteen manuscripts in the present corpus;²⁰ the remaining three manuscripts²¹ are more in keeping with the typical Oriental practice of avoiding letter elongation altogether.

Image 3: Example of slight letter elongation in C (p. 142/159)



5.0. Marking *petuḥa* at Column Head or Foot

Although the meaning of *petuḥa* ‘open (space break)’ is sufficiently clear in most instances, an ambiguity can arise if the break occurs at either the head or the foot of a column, viz., perhaps the blank line occurred through error of line count rather than intent. While some scribes seem to have been unconcerned by this potential perception of imprecision (cf. II B 67, II B 73), and simply left the blank space undisturbed, many scribes elected to write *peh* in the

²⁰ Slight letter elongation: C (infrequent, but cf. pp. 20/37, 142/159), Gottheil 18, WP, II B 19, II B 20, II B 46, II B 50, II B 57, II B 110, II B 1021, II B 1150, II B 1185, II B 1283, II B 1284, II B 1341, II B 1356.

²¹ Letter elongation not observed: II B 24, II B 116, II B 1396.

open space, clarifying that the space was, in fact, an intentional *petuḥa*. A mixture of both practices can be seen below.

Table 8: Different methods of marking *petuḥa* (non-corpus manuscripts)

Leningrad Codex ²²	BL Or. 4445 ²³	Tbilisi Torah ²⁴
Single <i>peh</i> supra:	<i>Peh</i> centered:	A blank space:
		
Double <i>peh</i> infra:		Or several <i>pehs</i> :
		
	Or blank space:	
		
Sassoon 1053 ²⁵	II B 8 ²⁶	
Three <i>pehs</i> :	Double <i>peh</i>	
		
Third <i>peh</i> no longer visible:		
		

²² Leningrad Codex: fols 66r, 67r.

²³ Or. 4445: fols 52r, 87r, 87v; other instances, all of which have a centred *peh*, include fols 108r, 140v, 144v, 146r. Entire codex examined (tenth-century sections only).

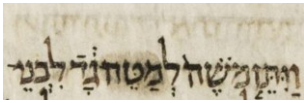
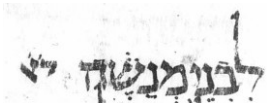

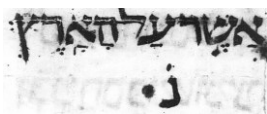
²⁴ Tbilisi Torah (Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Georgia Ms. Ebr. 3): p. 40, right side; p. 142, left side.

²⁵ Sassoon 1053: pp. 112, 447.

²⁶ II B 8: pp. 127, 205. Other examples include: with two *pehs* below (pp. 7 [2x], 175, 210, 221, 224, 227, 320, 367/8); with two *pehs* above (p. 147).

The use of *peh* to clarify a *petuḥa* space at the head or foot of a column seems predictable enough, and can be seen, in one form or another, in the majority of early codices. The use of *nun* for the same purpose—seen in both the Aleppo Codex and its ‘sister’ codex, II B 17—is more idiosyncratic.

Table 9: Marking of *petuḥa* in Shelmo ben Buya‘a manuscripts²⁷

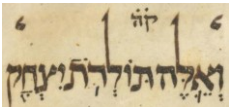
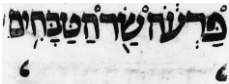

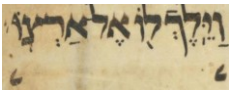


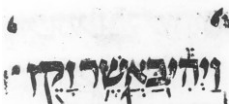





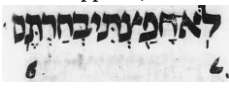
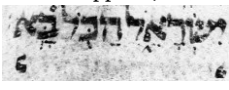

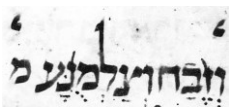
Aleppo Codex, blank space supra:	II B 17, blank space supra:
	
or <i>nun</i> infra:	or <i>nun</i> infra:
	

In the present corpus, however, no *pehs* are in evidence. Instead, the marking of *petuḥa* is achieved by means of rounded, ‘reverse commas’, as can be seen in the following examples (see Table 10, facing page; corpus manuscripts not listed in the table lack *petuḥa* spacing data—excepting C and II B 1396, on the two of which see below). Each of the manuscripts was examined in full; no exceptions were observed.

²⁷ In the Aleppo Codex: fols 14r, 27r. Other instances with a centred *nun* infra include: fols 90v, 98r, 143v, 146v, 216v, 230r; instances with a blank line supra include: fol. 80r. Folios not containing three columns on at least part of the page were not examined.

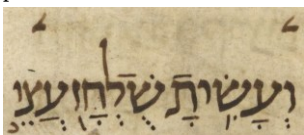
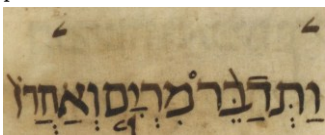
In II B 17, pp. 300, 22. Other instances with a centred *nun* infra include: pp. 248, 424; instances with a blank line supra include: p. 330/1 (entire codex examined).

Table 10: Rounded ‘reverse commas’ marking *petuḥa*

WP (f.26v, f.85r)	II B 19 (pp. 88, 310)	II B 20 (pp. 104, 175)
		
		
II B 50 (pp. 117, 142)	II B 1185 (p. 14)	Gottheil 18 (pp. 211, 423)
		
		
II B 57 (pp. 92, 116)	II B 110 (pp. 10, 11)	
		
		


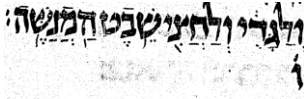
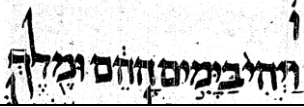
It should be pointed out that the practice of using ‘reverse commas’ is not wholly limited to the present corpus. The scribes of NLI 5702 = 24 (Sassoon 507), II B 56, and II B 1002 also use reverse commas. In the overwhelming majority of early manuscripts, however, the ‘reverse commas’ are not to be found.

Table 11: Marking *petuḥa* in Sassoon 507

p. 155	p. 303
	

Two manuscripts of the present corpus do not use ‘reverse commas’. The first is II B 1396, where such spaces are left entirely unmarked. The second is C, which by turns employs a *waw* (2x, both pictured) or merely leaves the space blank (4x).²⁸

Table 12: Marking *petuḥa* without reverse, rounded commas

II B 1396 (p. 34)	C (pp. 19/36, 69/86)
	
	

The blank spaces in C may be the result of copyist error, in which case they are not to be considered space breaks at all. For example, on p. 102/119 (following 1 Sam. 17.44) there is a full white space at the bottom of the column followed by a partial white space at the head of next column—an amount of space that is clearly more than necessary, whatever the spacing requirement. The full white space at the foot of the first column was probably left in error; the actual space intended is a *setuma* ‘closed [space break]’, as appears at the head of the second column, a space that also appears, for example, in Aleppo, Leningrad, and Sassoon 1053.

As for the practice in C of marking *petuḥa* with *waw* at the head or foot of a column—it is not seen elsewhere in the present

²⁸ These four instances of an unmarked, full, white space occur in C on pp. 102/119, 141/158, 477/500, 554/577.

corpus. This may indicate some difference between C and the remaining manuscripts. However, WP does have something similar to the above examples from C, albeit only when the *petuḥa* break is somewhere other than at the head or foot of a column.

Table 13: Space marking like that found in C in WP²⁹



In at least one additional instance, furthermore, WP uses a ‘reverse comma’ instead of *waw* in the centre of the page (fol. 153v), which seems to indicate that WP’s scribe understood the two signs (*waw* and ‘reverse commas’) to have similar functions.

In much the same way, II B 19 also employs *waw* in the centre of the page in at least three instances (pp. 158, 278, 280). As these three instances where the *waw* occurs are followed by words beginning with *waw*, their use is unclear. Perhaps they were intended as word-incipient line fillers instead of generic space holders.

6.0. Triple-Dotted *gimel*

In the *masora parva*, it is common for letters representing numerals to be distinguished from standard letters by means of the use

²⁹ Other instances include fols 80r and 149r.

of a single dot above the number, e.g., $\dot{\text{ז}}$ = ‘1x’, $\dot{\text{ח}}$ = ‘2x’, $\dot{\text{ט}}$ = ‘3x’, etc. In a few codices (e.g., BL Or. 9880; Oxford MS heb. b.17/1), single letters that represent numerals are systematically double-dotted instead of single-dotted, but such codices form the extreme minority.

Somewhat more prevalent is the practice of triple-dotting certain letters and single-dotting the remainder. Although this practice can be found in codices outside the present corpus, it is also prevalent here, particularly as pertains to the letter *gimel*. Notwithstanding the triple-dotting of *gimel* that often occurs, the feature is not employed consistently throughout a codex, not even on the same page where the *gimels* in question otherwise appear to be formed identically (cf. WP). In the present corpus, twelve manuscripts use a triple-dotted *gimel* at least occasionally (C, Gottheil 18, WP, II B 19, II B 20, II B 24, II B 50, II B 57, II B 110, II B 1021, II B 1284, II B 1356), most notably and frequently Gottheil 18, WP, and II B 24. The codices where a triple-dotted *gimel* is not observed number seven (II B 46,³⁰ II B 116, II B 1150, II B 1185, II B 1283, II B 1341, II B 1396). Thus, the feature represents one likely possibility that can occur in the present corpus, but it is by no means a given.

7.0. The Use of יפה *yafe*

As Martín-Contreras (2018) has carefully noted, the Masoretic term יפה *yafe* ‘correct’ is common in C, where it occurs in no

³⁰ A triple-dotted *gimel* can also be seen on II B 46, pp. 97–98 (11x); however, these pages appear to have been written by a different hand.

fewer than 75 instances. In many other codices, however, the term appears rarely, if at all: Aleppo (2x), Leningrad (0x), Or. 4445 (4x, but three of the instances appear to have been inserted by a different hand) (Martín-Contreras 2018, 607 fn. 1).

While I add nothing to Martín-Contreras's excellent treatment of the meaning of the term, it is worth noting that it is by no means exclusive to C. In the present corpus, the term can be found in the following thirteen manuscripts:

- C (75x) (see Martín-Contreras 2018);
- WP (2x): fols 72r and 146v;
- II B 19 (1x): p. 180;
- II B 24 (26x): pp. 6, 24, 36, 51, 52, 64, 78, 81, 85, 88, 121, 125, 130, 158, 176, 177, 189, 202, 207, 215, 242, 248, 260, 270, 283, and 320;
- II B 50 (6x): pp. 24, 701, 716, 719, 764, and 768;
- II B 57 (6x): pp. 39, 224, 278, 298, 342, and 347;
- II B 116 (1x): p. 22;
- II B 1021 (3x): pp. 11, 12, and 23;
- II B 1150 (3x): pp. 49, 54, and 61;
- II B 1283 (1x): p. 24;
- II B 1284 (2x): pp. 5 and 34;
- II B 1341 (4x): pp. 12, 28, 30, and 41;
- II B 1356 (3x): pp. 11, 17, and 18.

The term יפה *yafe* is not found in six codices of the present corpus: Gottheil 18,³¹ II B 20, II B 46, II B 110, II B 1185, and II B 1396.

³¹ Note that יפה *yafeh* 'pleasing, beautiful' occurs on p. 108 as a catch-word for Gen. 39.6.

Without examining thousands of additional pages from other manuscripts for comparative purposes, it is difficult to assess the importance of the above data. *Prima facie*, it would appear that the term occurs with higher frequency in the present manuscripts than elsewhere, as can be observed most notably in II B 24 (26x in ca 178 fols), a manuscript containing only the Former Prophets. As the pages of II B 24, although numerous, are not particularly well preserved, the frequency with which II B 24 employs יפה *yafe* appears roughly equal to that seen in C, with its 308 fols covering the entire Former and Latter Prophets.

8.0. Cumulative Masora

While all Masoretic codices by definition contain Masoretic notes, not all codices share the same type of note. Penkower (2021) divides the *masora magna* into two different types: enumerative Masora (מסורה מפרטת) and cumulative Masora (מסורה מצרפת). Enumerative Masora lists the number of times a word occurs followed by each of its associated references. Cumulative Masora, on the other hand, consists of lists of words that typically occur only once, or that share certain features.

As any student of Masora knows, enumerative Masora is ubiquitous in all Masoretic codices. Less common is cumulative Masora, which may occur only infrequently, if at all, in a given Bible codex. Penkower (2021) has pointed out that both C and WP contain cumulative Masora. The questions for us, then, are whether or not the present corpus of Bible codices happens to

contain cumulative Masora, and if these manuscripts show a different distribution of cumulative Masora lists than do other Bible codices of the period.

Table 14 (overleaf) lists instances of cumulative Masora both within and without the present corpus according to occurrence frequency. Pages were examined in random, 50-page sample blocks (where possible); these results are listed on column three. Manuscripts of the present, ‘thick script’ corpus are marked in red; manuscripts are listed according to occurrence frequency (col. 2).

One can readily see that the manuscripts included in the present corpus, though by no means identical in their rate of cumulative Masora, nonetheless fall within a given range of occurrence frequency, a rate typically above that of other Bible codices.

Conversely, several Bible codices show a level of cumulative Masora frequency above that of the present corpus (ENA 346 and Or. 4445)—so much so that they, once again, distinguish themselves from the present corpus in terms of excess of occurrence rather than scarcity.

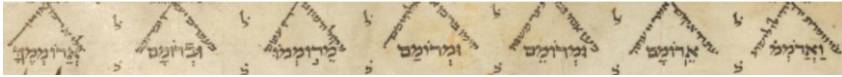
Table 14: Frequency of cumulative Masora in 36 early Masoretic codices

Classmark	Cumulative Masora/page	Actual counts
NY JTS 558 (ENA 346)	98%	50/50; 48/50
Or. 4445	86%	48/50; 38/50
II B 8	38%	29/50; 19/50; 9/50
II B 19	37%	12/50; 25/50
Gottheil 18	36%	15/50; 22/50; 21/50
Sassoon 507	33%	1/50; 28/50; 21/50
II B 1396	29%	13/38
II B 116	24%	12/50
II B 50	23%	10/50; 13/50
II B 1283	22%	11/50
C	21%	12/50; 9/50
II B 1150	18%	9/50
II B 24	18%	6/50; 12/50
II B 1284	18%	6/34
II B 110	17%	12/72
II B 80	14%	3/50; 15/50; 3/50
II B 20	13%	6/50; 7/50
II B 1341	13%	5/38
II B 9	12%	6/50; 6/50
II B 65	12%	5/50; 6/44
II B 1021	12%	3/26
WP	11%	5/50; 6/50
II B 46	7%	3/50; 4/50
II B 57	7%	2/50; 7/50; 1/50
II B 1185	6%	1/18
II B 60	3%	2/50; 1/ 50
II B 1356	2%	1/42
II B 17	1%	1/50; 0/50
II B 55	1%	0/50; 1/50
Aleppo Codex	0%	cf. Penkower (2021, 161)
Leningrad Codex	0%	0/50; 0/50
Sassoon 1053	0%	0/50; 0/50
II B 10	0%	0/50; 0/50
II B 26	0%	0/50; 0/50
II B 39	0%	0/50; 0/50
II B 96	0%	0/50

9.0. Presence of Micrography

Micrography (the arrangement of *masora parva* into aesthetically pleasing, generally geometric shapes³²) is often created from cumulative Masora lists, as the following image demonstrates.

Image 4: WP (fol. 80v)



Perhaps surprisingly, the rate of incidence for micrography does not strongly correlate with the presence of cumulative Masora, viz., few Masoretes of the period, although perhaps possessing an excess of this ‘raw material’, undertook the painstaking task of actually creating micrography. The scribes who did create micrography, however, often appear in the present corpus, as Table 15 (overleaf) demonstrates (corpus manuscripts in red; manuscripts listed according to occurrence percentage frequency).

Due to different rates of micrography within the ‘thick script’ corpus, it seems unwise to consider micrography to be a scribal-school feature. Instead, the increased incidence of micrography within the corpus may be attributable to other causes, such as the wealth of patrons who commissioned these codices. If so, we might expect that a not insignificant portion of the present corpus of codices was produced when and where Jews were financially well-off.

³² As defined here, micrography excludes instances where the *masora magna* script is of two sizes, unless some sort of geometric shape is also achieved.

Table 15: Occurrences of micrography in 36 early Masoretic codices

Classmark	Micrography/page	Actual counts
Gottheil 18	35%	52/150
II B 116	31%	39/124
C	11%	62/579
II B 57	10%	26/206
II B 19	3%	12/418
II B 24	3%	10/317
NY JTS 558 (ENA 346)	2%	4/232
II B 8	2%	7/379
WP	2%	8/425
II B 9	1%	3/260
Or. 4445	0%	0/255
Sassoon 507	0%	0/458
II B 1396	0%	0/39
II B 50	0%	1/766
II B 1283	0%	0/62
II B 1150	0%	0/74
II B 80	0%	0/248
II B 20	0%	0/319
II B 65	0%	0/135
II B 1021	0%	0/26
II B 46	0%	0/355
II B 1185	0%	0/20
II B 60	0%	0/222
II B 17	0%	1/459
II B 55	0%	0/296 (Former Prophets)
Aleppo Codex	0%	0/588
Leningrad Codex	0%	1/932
Sassoon 1053	0%	0/792
II B 10	0%	1/446
II B 26	0%	0/359
II B 39	0%	0/301
II B 110	0%	0/72
II B 96	0%	0/67
II B 1356	0%	0/42
II B 1341	0%	0/38
II B 1284	0%	0/34

10.0. Quire Markings

The quiring of a codex involves the assembly of multiple bifolia (bifolia = two leaves/four pages) into small notebooks, i.e., quires. These quires are subsequently bound together to produce the larger codex. Quire number markings typically occur in the top right corner of the first leaf of each quire, e.g., א, ב, ג, etc. The numbering occurs to ensure that the binder places the quires in their proper order.

Penkower has observed that quire markings are visible in both C and WP (2021, 161), noting that both share the quinion structure for quiring (= five bifolia per quire), as is typical in Oriental codices (cf. Beit-Arié 2021, 306–8). Why Penkower considered quire markings worthy of mention is not entirely clear; these markings are common in codices both inside and outside the ‘thick script’ corpus.

Among corpus manuscripts, quire markings regularly occur in Gottheil 18, II B 19, and II B 46, but only sporadically in the remaining manuscripts. This apparent absence of marking is not necessarily indicative, however, as the margins of the remaining manuscripts are severely damaged.

In early manuscripts outside the present corpus, examples of quire marking can be found in NY JTS 558 (ENA 346), Or. 4445, II B 10, and II B 55, while no quire markings were observed in Sassoon 507, II B 8, II B 9, II B 39—this despite the fact that the margins of the latter manuscripts are relatively intact. These data suggest, therefore, that quire markings in early Oriental manuscripts are not indicative of a discrete Oriental subgroup.

It is perhaps noteworthy that almost all Oriental manuscripts—both within and without the corpus—use the quinion structure for quiring. The sole exception within the corpus—so far as I can tell without examining the manuscripts *in situ*—is II B 46, which uses the quaternion structure (= four bifolia per quire). As II B 46 was routinely noted in the foregoing examples as being different from the remaining corpus manuscripts, yet another difference is hardly surprising.³³ In fact, as the quaternion structure in Oriental manuscripts is found mostly in Iran and surrounding areas (Beit-Arié 2021, 305), it is possible that any script similarities between II B 46 and the remaining manuscripts are only accidental, the remaining manuscripts being produced farther west. Alternatively, the scribe of II B 46 may have been influenced by North African and Sephardi quiring practices, whose scribes also appear to have preferred the quaternion format.

11.0. Conclusions

In the foregoing, ten features of Oriental Bible manuscripts with a script visually similar to that of C were examined to see if there is a discernible subgroup to which C might belong. These features include ‘thick script’, space between Bible books, marginal *nun/zayin*, left-justification, triple-dotted *gimel*, *petuḥa* marking, the use of *yafe* יפה, cumulative Masora, micrography, and quire

³³ II B 46 is either different from the majority of the remaining corpus (§§3.0–4.0, 6.0–7.0, 10.0), has insufficient data (§5.0), or is only marginally aligned with remaining corpus manuscripts (§§7.0–8.0). The only point of apparent similarity is that of script (§1.0).

markings. With the exception of quire markings, each of the above features was seen to correlate with the remaining features with at least an above-average frequency; in most cases, the rate of correlation between corpus manuscripts is relatively high.

The sole exceptional manuscript in the nineteen-member corpus seems to be II B 46, which differs from the remaining manuscripts in a number of instances. Thus, it would appear that C belongs to a readily discernible scribal school, a school that has not heretofore been recognised (with the exception of Penkower), probably because the majority of codices consulted by scholars, e.g., Aleppo, Or. 4445, Leningrad, Sassoon 507, Sassoon 1053, etc., are not of the school of C. Ways in which C differs from these codices, therefore, should not be attributed to C's putative greater age without corroborating evidence. Instead, one should consider the scribal circle from whence C arose when considering the differences between C and the aforementioned 'major' codices.

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HEBREW SCRIPT TERMINOLOGY IN CAIRO GENIZA BOOK LISTS*

Judith Olszowy-Schlanger

Writing is the most obvious visual element of material texts, and one of the main characteristics which allow their classification. For documents, writing determines authenticity in legal procedures; for liturgical scrolls, it establishes conformity with religious and ritual norms. For the historian, writing helps to reveal the circumstances of a work's production, subsequent readership, and vicissitudes. Defining the script in its various geographical and chronological inflections has constituted the start of the historical critical approach to texts since Dom. Jean Mabillon established the discipline of palaeography in the seventeenth century. For those who study manuscripts of the past as an academic discipline, the classification of scripts by their different parameters—the geographical origin of the scribe/book, mode or *genus scribendi*, graphic style, function of the script, and its aesthetic

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quality—is essential for transforming random writings into valid historical documents, ‘archaeological’ witnesses of a specific cultural, legal, and economic context in which they were produced and used. Scholars involved in the study of scripts need to put their typological observations into words, to convey their expertise to their fellow researchers and students. This is why the study of scripts requires specific terminology to capture and communicate variance in the manuscripts themselves. To classify scripts means to name, to label them, to define the reality of the ancient writings. Labelling adequately different categories of scripts has been one of the main preoccupations of modern palaeography, whatever the graphic system.

For Hebrew script, the norm established by the Hebrew Palaeography Project led by Colette Sirat and Malachi Beit-Arié since 1962, is to recognise that within the broad geographical ‘types’ (Oriental, Sephardi, Yemenite, Byzantine, Italian, and Ashkenazi), scribes used three ‘styles’ or modes of script: square, cursive, and one in-between called semi-square, semi-cursive, or, in Hebrew, בינוני (Beit-Arié 1987). It is to Moritz Steinschneider that contemporary Hebrew manuscript studies owe this tripartite classification of *modus scribendi*. In his *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*, Steinschneider (1897) distinguished between the square, cursive, and intermediary script. This modern classification is confirmed, as pointed out by Beit Arié, by medieval texts that describe variants of Hebrew script in the Muslim West, including the Iberian Peninsula. Joseph Ibn Migash (d. 1141), whose description was quoted in a responsum by Maimonides, is the earliest source offering a classification of Hebrew

Hebrew script in three modes. Ibn Migash, and Maimonides after him, distinguished מ'לס *mujlas*, from *jalasa* 'sit', מע'לק *mu'allaq*, from 'alaqa, 'be hung, suspended', and מד'בד'ב *mudhabdhab*, a difficult term which does not appear in other sources, that may derive from *dhabba* 'drive, chase away', which Joshua Blau translated as מתנעה *mitna'a* 'mobile' in his edition of the responsum, and simply as בינוני 'in-between (writing style)' in his more recent dictionary of Judaeo-Arabic.¹ While the term 'square' was never problematic, the non-square modes were indeed described differently by scholars. The tripartite division was accepted by Solomon Birnbaum, who, in his groundbreaking album of Hebrew palaeography (Birnbaum 1954–1971), used Elias Levita's (1469–1539) term *masha'it* to designate the intermediary script. Other scholars gave different names to the non-square varieties. In 1886, Adolf Neubauer appended to his Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Neubauer 1886) a facsimile edition of forty manuscript samples illustrating geographical varieties of such non-square scripts from Palestine, Egypt, Spain, Italy, and Ashkenaz, calling this variety 'Rabbinical' Hebrew script. The term 'rabbinic script' was used in various nineteenth-century catalogues.

¹ The sources for this tripartite terminology are discussed in Beit-Arié et al. (1987, 11–12), who quotes the responsum of Maimonides, ed. Blau (1960, II:514). The term בינוני was chosen by Beit-Arié to describe what he calls an intermediary script-mode between square and cursive, because it is found in a Hebrew translation of the aforementioned Judaeo-Arabic responsum of Maimonides. The Hebrew version Beit-Arié refers to is the sixteenth-century Oxford MS Opp. Add. 4° 143 (Neubauer 2359).

The drive to categorise, define, and put the different scripts into a logical series is not the exclusive prerogative of the modern scientific mind and palaeography. The need to define and categorise scripts was felt also in the Middle Ages. Of course, earlier sources, such as the Talmud and various midrashim, contain scattered descriptions of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Their role is to ensure religious conformity of scrolls used in public liturgy (for example, b. Shabbat 103a–b, referencing letters which should be written in such a way that their shapes cannot be confused, such as *ʾalef* versus *ʿayin*, or *bet* versus *kaf*, or *heh* versus *het*), or the shapes of letters as a point of departure for edifying midrashic stories (such as the explanation in y. Hagiga 2.1 for raised serifs on the upper part of the letter *bet* as a sign that this letter was used to create the world). In the context of legal documents, the examination of handwriting was an important practice for establishing a document's authenticity as judicial proof.

However, in addition to these religious and legal objectives, various documentary sources found in the Cairo Geniza show that identification of script was also a straightforward way of describing a book. The lists written by bibliophile book owners and, especially, by booksellers (*warrāqūn*) are a perfect example of the use of script and handwriting identification for describing books in a commercial context. While far from the historical preoccupations of modern palaeographers, these descriptions reveal how different script categories were perceived, used, and named in daily, practical contexts.

In this paper, I examine terms used to describe script (a typological definition of writing) and handwriting (a product of

an individual scribe) in the lists of books found in the Cairo Geniza and look for their sources and roles in the Egyptian literate Jewish community of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries. Hebrew script nomenclature in these lists reflects contact with the neighbouring Arabic writing culture and is a token of the growing importance of book collecting and trade. The specific genre of book lists and inventories drawn up by library owners, readers, copyists, and booksellers is relatively well attested in the Cairo Geniza. A total of 114 lists have been published by Nehemiah Allony et al. (2006), who also provide the texts with an erudite commentary and bibliography of previous editions. A further thirty fragments of book lists have been identified and studied in the framework of the DFG/AHRC project ‘Jewish Book Culture in the Islamicate World’.² While the book lists were keenly edited and used for the reconstruction of the medieval Jewish readers’ ‘bookshelf’ and for tracing lost literary works, very few scholars have exploited their potential for economic, social, and book material history.³ Book lists vary in structure, content, and degree of precision of book description, but most contain titles and many inform on books’ authors and thematic categories. Some mention prices, book materials, sizes and formats, states of conservation, and binding. About a third of the lists describe the books also

² Some of these lists are written in Arabic script, e.g., T-S Ar. 20.5, T-S AS 181.79, T-S Ar. 42.76, T-S Ar. 39.29, and T-S Misc. 24.28. For the latter, see Hirschler (2022).

³ A notable exception is Frankel (2017). Ronny Vollandt in this volume studies the book lists as a source for materiality of the book.

from the point of view of their writing. The aforementioned tripartite division of script modes is not found in the Geniza lists. Two terms quoted by Maimonides, מוג'לס *mujlas* and מע'לק *mu'al-laq*, are well attested, but they appear among several other descriptors used to categorise script type, quality, and origin, as well as the individual scribe's handwriting.

Mention of script or handwriting is not consistent in the book lists and includes criteria other than script types alone. Books can be defined according to their graphic system (Hebrew or Arabic script), writing quality, presence or absence of vowels, as well as by 'typological' parameters of the script's geographic provenance and mode. Individual scribes' handwriting is mentioned relatively often. All in all, 46 lists describe at least one item from the point of view of one or more aspects of script. This represents just over 33 percent of the known lists.⁴ Only half

⁴ Allony et al. eds. (2006): nos 1 (T-S K6.45), 4 (T-S 10 K 20.9 + T-S Misc. 36.147), 5 (T-S NS 312.84), 6 (T-S NS J 94.53), 7 (ENA 2687.1), 9 (Mosseri I.106), 10 (Bodl. MS Heb d 66.68), 11 (T-S K3.25-26), 13 (Harkavy K.5), 19 (T-S 8 K 22.7), 20 (T-S Ar. 51.89), 21 (BL Or 10118.1), 23 (Bodl. MS Heb f 36.99), 26 (T-S NS 298.52), 28 (ENA 2687.2), 30 (T-S Misc. 36.150), 31 (T-S Misc. 36.149), 40 (Bodl. MS Heb f 22.25v-52v), 42 (T-S NS 228.3), 43 (T-S K3.14), 44 (ENA 2687.6), 46 (Bodl. MS Heb d 66.131-132), 47 (ENA 1290.7), 50 (T-S 10 K 20.4), 61 (T-S Ar. 52.214), 62 (T-S 10 K 20.8), 63 (ENA 1290.1 (wrongly edited as ENA 1290.16), 65 (T-S K3.32), 67 (T-S 20.44), 69 (T-S Ar. 51.75), 71 (T-S K3.45), 75 (T-S Misc. 36.134), 80 (T-S 20.47), 81 (Bodl. MS Heb f 56.50), 90 (ENA 1290.4), 91 (T-S AS 146.55), 92 (T-S AS 55.46), 95 (RNL Evr-Ar I 127, fol. 1r), 97 (ENA 2539), 98 (T-S Misc. 36.148), 99 (T-S K6.170), 101 (T-S K3.44), 102 (T-S 10 K 20.10), 108 (T-S K3.42), 114 (T-S NS J 94.126).

mention more than one aspect of script, with the exceptional attention to script in T-S NS 312.84, which mentions it in nine out of some fifty listed bound volumes and fascicles; ENA 2687.1, where eight items out of 45 are described by their the writing; ENA 2687.6, with seven mentions of script or handwriting out of at least seventy items; and T-S 20.47, an inventory of books and objects belonging to the Babylonian synagogue in Fustat drawn up in 1080, which mentions script and handwriting in the description of six out of at least 22 books. It should be noted that these statistics include some descriptors whose meaning is unclear or which may refer to either the script or the text. This includes such terms as ‘Arabic’ *mujarrad* (which Allony understood as ‘unbound’, while it may be a mode of writing), and the terms פשאט and מקרא or קרא.

The mention of writing is often introduced with בכט *bi-khatt* ‘in the writing of...’⁵ or כט *khatt* ‘the writing of...’ (ENA 1290.7, ln. 1), used for both ‘handwriting, hand’, i.e., the individual personal production of a specific scribe, and ‘script’, as a typological entity.

1.0. Hebrew versus Arabic Script

Jewish readers in medieval Egypt were keen on Arabic books of any genre, be it science, medicine, poetry and *belles-lettres*, or even theology. Bibliophiles collected Jewish and Arabic books, and booksellers traded in books in both languages and scripts. On

⁵ The word כט is also used in the sense of ‘manuscript, book’, e.g., a book list T-S 16.19: בטט ע' אלדיין ‘books presently held by the judge’ (Allony et al. 2006, 46, no. 8, ln. 130).

the whole, the majority of the items inventoried in the Geniza book lists are Jewish works transmitted in manuscripts in Hebrew characters in Hebrew or Arabic language, but there are also works of Muslim or Jewish authors in Arabic script. T-S 20.44, which records the post-mortem public sale in 1244 of the library of Abraham he-Ḥasid, describes the books on sale as *maṣāḥif ʿib-rāni wa-ʿarabi* ‘Hebrew and Arabic codices’. This sale, which took place on the premises of the Palestinian synagogue in Fustat, lasted two days; day one saw Jewish books auctioned and day two books in Arabic script destined for a broader readership, including works on medicine in Arabic script. From the names of the buyers recorded in the list, we gather that non-Jewish readers and book merchants were indeed among the buyers on day two.

The description of a book as Hebrew or Arabic appears in twenty documents. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether the reference concerns language or script. In T-S NS 312.84 ln. 43 a commentary (עבארה) is described as בלפט' ערבי ‘in Arabic wording’, probably referring to the language rather than the graphic system. There are several references to the *Megillat Setarim*, sometimes in Arabic and sometimes in Hebrew, without specifying whether the designation concerns language or script.⁶ Similarly, when T-S Misc. 36.148 mentions an Arabic copy of Yosippon (כתאב בן גוריון אלערבי) and later a Hebrew copy (ln. 30), these designations may refer to language and/or script, as this

⁶ T-S Misc 36.150 mentions ‘a juz’ of *Megillat Setarim* in Arabic’ (ln. 6), and the same work in Hebrew (ln. 16). *Megillat Setarim* in Arabic is also mentioned in T-S Ar. 51.79 (ed. Allony et al. 2006, no. 38) ln. 50. ENA 2539, again, mentions Hebrew (ln. 36) and Arabic (ln. 67) copies.

work, originally composed in Hebrew, was translated into Arabic and circulated in copies in Arabic and Hebrew script (Sela 1992). Bodl. MS Heb d 66.68 ln. 30 mentions a *sharḥ* of Leviticus in Arabic. Here, there is a strong possibility that באלערבי refers to the script, as the fact that it is a *sharḥ*, a translation or commentary introduced by this Arabic heading, already implies that the text was in the Arabic language. Three copies of ‘Leviticus in Arabic’ are listed in Bodl. MS Heb f 22.25v–52r, a day book of a Fustat book seller active in the 1150s (lns 137, 298, 310, and 323–24). The same document mentions a copy of Genesis and Exodus in Arabic (ln. 235). While here this may refer to an Arabic translation rather than a transliteration in Arabic characters, a mention of the *tafsīr* of Deuteronomy in Arabic in T-S Misc. 36.150 (ln. 47) may indicate Arabic script, as *tafsīr* is obviously an Arabic commentary or translation.

In some cases, doubt is reduced thanks to explicit mention of script (*khatt*). Most of these books are Arabic works of science and medicine. In Mosseri I.106, Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq’s Arabic work on ophthalmology, תד'כרה אלכחאלין is described as בט עבראני ‘in Hebrew script’ (lns 18–19). T-S Misc. 36.148 mentions a medical work in Arabic script (בכט ערבי), a work on the astrolabe in Arabic script, and an unidentified text which opens a bundle of unbound quires (lns 125, 126, and 132). ENA 1290.4 (ln. 5) mentions ‘an Arabic book on medicine’, too. In T-S AS 146.55 Arabic books are a separate category introduced by ומן אלערבי, which includes a fascicle of al-Iṣfahānī’s *Al-’aghānī* ‘The songs’, the medical compendium *al-Kunnāsh* of a Syriac physician Yaḥya ibn Serāpiyūn (lns 6–8). T-S 8 K 22.7 mentions parchment quires containing

Arabic script [כר] אריס ופיה בט ערבי והו רק (lns 1–2). Similar untitled ‘quires in Arabic’ are mentioned several times in Bodl. MS Heb f 22.25v–52r (lns 27–28, 38–39, and 50). References to ‘an Arabic book, a copy in Arabic’, with no mention of title, refer to non-Jewish works most probably in Arabic script (T-S K3.14, lns 29–30).⁷

However, there are also examples of Jewish legal works described explicitly as rendered in Arabic script. Mosseri I.106 (lns 22–23) mentions a Jewish work כ'ת טומאה וטהרה the ‘Book on Impurity and Purity’, probably a work by Sa‘adya Gaon written כ'ט ערבי כריק ‘in Arabic script of *takhrīq* type’.⁸

2.0. Quality of Writing

The quality of writing has an impact on a book’s legibility and, as such, its value. In the letter T-S Misc. 36.134, the writer, likely a professional scribe or book entrepreneur and seller, asks the addressee to provide him with exemplars of several biblical books, all of them containing the *Tafsīr* of Sa‘adya Gaon. He complains that a copy of the *Tafsīr* of Psalms he had received previously was useless, as it was written in a ג'לק אלכ'ט ‘confused

⁷ This is also likely the case of *kalām ‘arabī* in Bodl. MS Heb f 22.25v–52v, ln. 434.

⁸ On *takhrīq* script, see Rosenthal (1948, 5–6):

Takhrīk (“piercing”) means keeping open the loops of the *hā*’, *‘ayin*, *ghayin*, and similar letters, however they occur, either alone by themselves or together with others of their kind, so as to make recognizable their distinct shape and their opening (even) to weak eyes.

script'. The writing was so bad, that the book could not be used as a model exemplar to make new copies (מא אנכתב לי מנה שיא ואן) (מחל הדא פלא תוג'ה שי או תסתעיר לי מן ענד צדיק לך) (lns 7–8). He was so disappointed, that he asked not to send anything of this kind again. In addition to this term that clearly denounces bad quality writing, there are more ambiguous expressions, whose interpretation is not evident. A book is sometimes described as *basīt* 'simple, uncomplicated', a term used several times in T-S NS 312.84 (lns 10, 16, 18, 25), with no clear-cut indication that it refers to the type or quality of writing. The semantically corresponding Hebrew פשט and, more frequently, its Arabicised form פשאט, are used in a similar context, with no clear indication that they refer to the script. Thus, in ENA 2687.1, פשט describes a copy of the *Tafsīr* of the Former Prophets ללאסדאר פשט ג'מעהא פשט 'all of it *peshat* according to the sedarim' (ln. 1), as does T-S Misc. 36.148 (ln. 112), where the Prophets פשאט are in a 'bundle' (רבטה) together with a popular explanation of the book of Kings, also described as פשאט. T-S Misc. 36.150, too, mentions '*Tafsīr* פשט of R. Saadya, from Leviticus to the end of the Torah' (ln. 49). Joseph Rosh ha-Seder, in T-S C7.169, describes as פשאט a commentary (*tafsīr*) of the Talmudic tractates Sanhedrin and Horayot, as well as a copy of the *Tafsīr* of the book of Samuel (lns 2–3). As the majority of the books described as *peshaṭ* are Bible and Talmud commentaries, it is legitimate to consider it a description of the 'literal' exegetical method (ln. 1). However, this term is also used to describe biblical manuscripts: in T-S Ar. 51.75, פשאט characterises אלתורה אלמקדסה 'the holy Torah' (ln. 5), and in T-S K3.45, it describes a fascicle (*daftar*): ודפתר פיה פשאט אלה הדברים:

‘of the פשט of Deuteronomy’ (ln. 6). While the precise significance of both *peshat* and *basit*, both meaning ‘simple’, is unclear, it is possible they refer to writing, either the quality of the script or to a lack of vowels.

Two lists (one post-medieval) mention writing in coloured ink. In T-S NS 312.84, a volume lists the Arabic translation of Sa‘adya Gaon of two biblical *parashot*, written in square script also described as ‘red’ (*ashqar*) (lns 5–6). From this description, it is difficult to gather more information about the nature and precise use of the colour. The description seems to apply the adjective ‘red’ to the script as a whole, rather than to rubrics, initials, or some kind of decoration. Maybe it designates the reddish hue of plant or iron-gall ink, rather than red pigment. In another document, a Karaite list written probably in the sixteenth century, it is clear that ‘red’ refers only to the rubrics: in this prayer book for Yom Kippur on paper, only the beginnings of the sections were highlighted with red colour (אוּאִיל אֶלְכֵּלָאֵם מִגְּזוּף בְּאַחֲמֵר) (MS Harkavy K.5, lns 66–68).

3.0. Vocalisation

The addition of vocalisation signs changes the visual aspect of a book and, if expertly done, increases its reliability. It also considerably extends the time needed for book production, requires additional knowledge from scribes, and increases a book’s costs and price. Consequently, the presence or absence of vowels is sometimes mentioned as a feature of a book. The presence or absence of vocalisation is rarely stated unambiguously, as in T-S NS

312.84, in which a copy of the *Kitāb Al-Khilaf* ‘Book of Differences’, cataloguing points of contrast in the Masoretic tradition between Ben Asher and Ben Naftali, in a square script, is described as מנקט צחיה ‘vocalised and proofread (lns 47–48), while T-S 20.47 lists a biblical codex, surprisingly unvocalised (בלא נקט), despite the fact that it is provided with hard-board binding and is probably in a large format—three columns per page (ומצחף) (ln. 20). In the aforementioned 1080 inventory of the books of the Babylonian synagogue in Fustat, T-S 20.47, an Iraqi Pentateuch is provided with ‘Syrian-Tiberian’ vocalisation (תורה עראקי בנקט שאמי טבראני) (lns 16–17).

However, it seems that the presence or absence of vowel signs can also be signalled by the words *qera*, or *qur'an*, derived from ‘reading’. These terms are ambiguous. One would expect that they refer to the Bible (*miqra*), as such, and indeed in one case *qur'an* and *qera* seem to designate the Hebrew Bible, as distinct from the Aramaic translation: Bodl. MS Heb f 56.50, an inventory of possessions of the Babylonian synagogue in Fustat, drawn up in 1181–1182, mentions three codices of קרא ותרגום ‘the Hebrew text and the Targum’—a codex of the Latter Prophets; another similar bilingual volume, this time described as ‘of large dimensions’; and a codex containing all eight prophetic books (lns 11, 19, and 35–36). In these occurrences, *qera* seems to be synonymous to *naṣṣ* ‘(biblical) text’ as in אלתלים נן ‘the Psalms text’ in T-S Ar. 51.75 (ln. 8). We can indeed understand as the Hebrew text references to Job, Isaiah, and Jeremiah in (*qera*) ENA 2687.1 (lns 3, 16), Twelve Minor Prophets (*qur'an*), and

Samuel (*qera*) in T-S 10 K 20.8 (lns 14–15, 19). However, in addition to designating biblical text, *qera* must have another meaning, most probably that of a vocalised text. Thus, Joseph Rosh ha-Seder mentions in one of his inventories, T-S 10 K 20.10, a bible manuscript which is *qera* (מקרא קרא) (ln. 38). *Qera* does not necessarily designate a Hebrew bible: in Mosseri I.106, it refers to a translation/commentary (*sharḥ*) of Torah and a part of the Prophets, ‘all of it *qera*’ (שרח אל תורה ירמיה ותרי עשר יהושע ושפטי) (ובעץ שמואל אלגמיע קרא) (ln. 2). This supports the interpretation of *qera* as a vocalised text. Indeed, another Geniza book list, T-S 19.19, mentions a גז כתיב תורה ‘a fascicle of Torah writing’, which can be understood as a part of the Pentateuch without vocalisation (ln. 127).

4.0. Script Type and Mode

Several terms used in the book lists refer directly to the typology of the script and use consistent terminology. The typological definitions concern the mode of the script or its geographical origin.

4.1. *Mujlas* and *mu‘allaq*

The two terms which are used the most frequently are *mujlas* and *mu‘allaq*. They refer to the two modes of Oriental scripts. *Mujlas* or *khatt mujlas* is mentioned in the description of biblical codices (T-S K3.14, lns 18, 25, 42), Bible translations (T-S NS 312.84, lns. 5, 33), liturgy (T-S K3.14, ln. 35), the Mishna (ENA 2539, lns 98–99), Talmudic tractates and exegesis (T-S NS 312.84, ln. 29; T-S K3.14, ln. 1; ENA 2687.6, ln. 53; ENA 2539, lns 98–99), dictionaries and Masoretic works (T-S NS 312.84, lns 47–48), and the

Mishneh Torah (ENA 2539, lns 98–99). The genres of the books written in *mu‘allaq* also include biblical translations and commentaries (T-S K3.14, lns 19, 38, 44), liturgy (T-S K3.14, ln. 37), and rabbinic texts, as well as scientific and calendrical works (T-S K3.14, lns 36, 39).

As mentioned above, these Arabic terms, *mujlas* and *mu‘allaq*, are identified, respectively, with square and non-square script, the latter characterised by varying degrees of cursivity. The use of these terms in medieval sources confirms this identification with extant script modes. It is noteworthy that these Arabic terms correspond to Hebrew terminology of script found in the classical sources and discussed from a historical perspective, including in medieval texts created in Egypt.

Medieval authors, of course, followed Talmudic sources, which distinguish two basic categories of Hebrew script: *ketav ‘ivri* ‘Hebrew script’ and *ketav ashuri* ‘Assyrian script’ (as we shall see, medieval sources offer a different etymology for the latter). Medieval discussions stem from the famous account in b. Sanhedrin 21b–22a, which reports the saying of Mar Zutra, in turn quoting Mar ‘Uqba, that the Torah was given twice to the people of Israel, first, to Moses, written in *ketav ‘ivri* (also called *ketav libon’a* in this Talmudic passage) and in the ‘holy tongue’, and, later, to Ezra the scribe, in *ketav ashuri* and in Aramaic. The Talmud specifies that the Jews chose *ketav ashuri* and Hebrew (the holy tongue) for their Torah, leaving *ketav ‘ivri* and Aramaic for the commoners (*hediyotot*), which the Talmud, on the testimony of Rav H̄isda, identifies with the Samaritans (*kutim*). Scholars agree that *ketav ‘ivri* is the ‘palaeo-Hebrew’ script, whereas *ketav*

ashuri is the originally Aramaic Hebrew square script used until today.

In twelfth-century Egypt, this discussion in b. Sanhedrin 21b–22a is echoed by Maimonides (Hilkhot Tefillin 1.19), who described *ketav ashuri* as the only one suitable to be used for copying sacred text. For Maimonides, *ketav ashuri* is the script of the revelation. In a responsum, Maimonides (ed. Blau 1960, 513) equates this sacred script with the contemporary *mujlas* used for the Sefer Torah (בבט מג'לס אעני כתב אשורי כספר תורה).

The thirteenth-century Judaeo-Arabic dictionary of Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* by Tanḥum Yerushalmi discusses these two scripts under the lemma עבר. In a lengthy discussion, Tanḥum presents the history of *ketav 'ivri* and *ketav ashuri*, their different functions, and the etymology of their names. More importantly for our purpose, Tanḥum equated these Talmudic labels with the modes of the Hebrew script used in his world, that is, in thirteenth-century Egypt. He glossed *ketav ashuri* as *mujlas*, literally 'seated', and distinguishes it from another script category, *mu'allaq* 'hung, attached'. He then defined the *mu'allaq* script as derived from *mujlas*. This common script was created to provide the writers with an alternative, non-sacred script for use in mundane writings. Thus, according to Tanḥum, the *mu'allaq* was invented as a replacement for the ancient *ketav 'ivri*. (ed. Shai 2005, 405).

Unlike the Talmud, in which *ketav 'ivri* was the original script of revelation, the medieval scholar Tanḥum Yerushalmi acts as historian and archaeologist, noting the presence of ancient writing on coins and inscriptions known to him and remarking

on its similarity to Samaritan script. He considers *ketav 'ivri* a foreign graphic system. He stresses the antiquity and superiority of *ketav ashuri*, understands its name as derived from *yashar* 'straight', and identifies it with *mujlas*. Tanḥum praises the later invention *mu'allaq*, and in true palaeographical spirit, describes it as a form created on the basis of *mujlas*. Indeed, non-square script used in the Islamicate East is a more cursive version of the square script. An interesting observation concerns the respective function of each script: *mujlas* for elevated matters and *mu'allaq* for practical and mundane writings, in which it replaced the 'foreign' *ketav 'ivri*.

4.2. *Muḥaqqaq*

In addition to the basic distinction between square and non-square, book lists sometimes use the Arabic term *muḥaqqaq*. In Hebrew sources, it seems to refer to calligraphic writing, a particularly decorative version of the *mujlas*, and is attested as a script used to write biblical codices and prayer books. T-S Ar. 52.214, dating from 1244, mentions *איוב נץ מחקק* 'the book of Job: the biblical text in the *muḥaqqaq* script' (ln. 10). Joseph Rosh ha-Seder several times in T-S K6.170 mentions books he plans to write in *khatt muḥaqqaq*, which turn out to be bibles and siddurim on Baghdadi paper (lns 39, 111, 115–16). That *muḥaqqaq* differs from *mujlas* 'basic square script', is clear from another passage in the same list by Joseph Rosh ha-Seder. He summarises his grandiose project of copying a library of essential books in fifty volumes (lns 199–201). The titles include a Bible in three volumes corresponding to the three main divisions, Torah, Prophets

and Hagiographa; the Mishna in six volumes, one volume per order; Tosefta; Alfasi (*Halakhot*); and a Siddur in one volume; as well as 37 bound volumes of the Talmud. All fifty volumes are bound and written on uniform in-octavo format on Baghdadi paper. While the Torah and the Siddur are in *khatt muḥaqqaq*, with 20 lines per page, the remaining books of the set, including the two remaining biblical sections, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, are in *khatt mujlas*, still a decorative script, but of lesser quality, as reflected in its smaller size—these remaining volumes have 23 lines per page.

The Arabic term *muḥaqqaq* ‘properly done, accurate, verified, exact’ (Rosenthal 1948, 6), designates a calligraphic script used for codices of the Quran and, from the Mameluke period onwards, also for monumental inscriptions on buildings and objects. This Arabic script, with outlines rounder and more harmonious than the angular Kufic script, was developed in the tenth-century heyday of Arabic calligraphy in Abbasid Baghdad, and is first mentioned in Ibn Nādim’s *Fihrist*. This script, associated with the sacred through its role in the copy of the Quran, was particularly favoured by masters of Arabic calligraphy, such as the legendary founder of the perfectly proportioned script, the author of the *Risāla al-khatt wal-kalam* ‘Epistle on writing and on calamus’, the vizier Ibn Muqla (d. 940), and the famous eleventh-century Baghdadi calligrapher, Ibn al-Bawwāb. In Hebrew, the verbal root ק"ח, has the solemn resonance of engraving on stone. However, in the Middle Ages, this verb is used with a meaning which echoes the Arabic reference to a calligraphic script category. Thus, it is likely that when the remarkable master

calligrapher, Samuel ben Jacob, says חקקתי in the colophon of the famous ‘Leningrad Bible’ (RNL I Heb 19a, Fustat, 1008/10), he means not that he ‘engraved’ the consonantal text, but that he used a particularly calligraphic, proportionate version of the square Hebrew script to write it: his Bible is written in *muḥaqqaq*.

4.3. *Mashq*

Another term borrowed from the register of Arabic calligraphy is *mashq*. It appears in only one book list, the aforementioned ENA 2687, where it describes a vocalised copy of Job (איוב משק קרא) (ln. 3). For Arabic authors, *mashq* is a less careful type of script, which implies “an uninterrupted movement with a disregard for the right proportions. This causes disorder, which results from the hand being tired. It has often made the calamus aggressive, or caused the writing tool to be rebellious” (Rosenthal 1948, 7). Some scholars consider *mashq* a script which disregards diacritics and uses ligatures for letters which normally should not be connected (Rosenthal 1948, 47). For Steinschneider (1897, 30), the Arabic term *mashq* corresponds to a less formal Hebrew variety of script. Solomon Birnbaum (1971, 425), too, derives from Arabic *mashqi*, which he translates as “informal writing, writing exercises,” the somehow corrupted Hebrew term *masha‘it*, used later by Ashkenazi Jews (and by Birnbaum himself), to designate the non-square script, and more specifically its bookhand variant.

4.4. *Raqīq*

Another term to designate non-square script mode is *raqīq* (רבט) ריקק literally ‘thin writing’), attested in T-S NS 298.52 to describe

a collection of responsa and letters (ln. 65). At its face value, this term could be taken as an aesthetic judgement, rather than a typological category. Undoubtedly, it refers to stroke thickness, which, in turn, relates to the way the calamus's nib was cut. Rather than cutting it with a broad nib, which allows for tracing thick strokes, as in calligraphic writing, the calamus is pointed, ready to trace thin, less decorative lines of uniform thickness, but permitting greater flexibility and facility in tracing curvilinear lines and changing stroke direction. A pointed calamus was used in non-calligraphic writings, including letters, documents, and less formal books, often written faster, with some degree of cursivity. However, the physical description of the script as 'thin', seems also to reflect a script style. Indeed, its Hebrew equivalent, כתיבה דקה 'thin writing', appears in the legal work *Toldot 'Adam ve-Havah* by Yeruḥam ben Meshullam to designate a non-square script. Active in Provence and, after the 1306 expulsion, in Toledo, where he was a student of Asher ben Yeḥiel, Yeruḥam quotes Rabbenu Tam's permission to write during non-festive parts of the festivals (*ḥol ha-mo'ed*) provided that it is done in *ketiva daqa* 'thin script' without 'a change'. This is permitted because this non-square script 'was not given on Sinai, unlike the thick script' (*ketiva gasa*). It is likely that the term *ghaliṣ*, 'thick, crude' attested in T-S Misc. 36.149 (כתאב בכט גליט) 'a book in thick writing' ln. 139), and in T-S Misc. 36.148 (ln. 106), where it described the script of a bound *Siddur*, is the opposite of *raqīq* and

designates script executed with a thick-nibbed calamus. Interestingly, *ketiva daqa* in Yeruḥam ben Meshullam's work is described as equivalent to *mashqi*.⁹

So, in the belief that medieval Torah scrolls were exact replicas of the scroll given to Moses on Mount Sinai, if 'thick script' designates the calligraphic square script used for writing liturgical scrolls, 'thin script' designates informal, more cursive non-square script. It is likely that the Arabic term *raqīq* used in a Geniza list was also understood as *mashq*, designating non-square script.

4.5. *Mujarrad*

The term *mujarrad* literally 'bare, stripped, naked' is attested in nine book lists from the Cairo Geniza (T-S K6.45, lns 4, 10, 19; T-S 8K22.7, lns 28, 30, 40, 46, 65; T-S K3.32). Allony et al. (2006) offer two interpretations of this term: 'unbound' (e.g., T-S 8 K 22.7, lns 1–5, 7, 8, 13; T-S K3.32, ln. 35) or 'in a simple script' (T-S K6.45, ln. 3). T-S 8 K 22.7 describes several books as *mujarrad* (lns 1–5, 7, 8, 13). In this short document (only fifteen lines are preserved), the term appears no fewer than seven times, describing a fascicle (*juz'*). Three items in this list are described as *mujlad* 'bound', which mirrors the use of *mujarrad*. Neither here nor in any other document are *mujarrad* and *mujlad* used together to define the same item. One parchment fascicle is described as *mujarrad* and also classifies the script as Arabic. It is also specified

⁹ מצאתי בגליון שמתיר ר'ת לכתוב בחול המועד בכתיבת משקי שהיא כתיבה דקה בלא גסה (ed. Constantinople, 1516, fol. 31r).

that this fascicle is incomplete, with several quires missing (lns 1–2: ג'זו מגרד פיה כנאש עאגז [כר] אריס ופיה בט ערבי והו (ורק). Similarly, when T-S Misc. 36.150 allocates the lower shelf (אלרף אלספל) in a bookcase to the *mujarradāt*, it may refer to unbound volumes (ln. 50). In most cases, however, *mujarrad* simply follows the book title or another descriptor. While nothing contradicts the claim that it means ‘unbound’, in Arabic texts *mujarrad* defines a script, perhaps a simple script without vowel signs, as suggested by Gacek (2009, s.v.).¹⁰ It is likely that the Jewish book lists, too, use *mujarrad* to define a less calligraphic and unvocalised script.

4.6. Defining Script by Geographical Origin

T-S 20.47, an inventory of books and other precious objects belonging to the Babylonian synagogue in Fustat, drawn up in 1080, contains rare descriptions of script according to provenance: a biblical codex is described as Iraqi from the point of view of its consonantal script, whereas the vowels are Tiberian (lns 16–17), another biblical text described as קראן with the Targum is in Iraqi script, a Pentateuch in Iraqi script is vocalised with Syrian *shāmī*¹¹ vowels.¹² Yet another item, a codex of Hagiographa, is described as written in Iraqi script and vocalised with

¹⁰ For *mujarrad* as a simple version of the Qufi script, see Rosenthal (1948, 3).

¹¹ The term *shāmī* is glossed as Tiberian.

¹² Another mention of region appears in Bodl. MS Heb d 66.131–132 (ln. 3): Targum of *haftarot* of the Torah bound in hard cover, described

Iraqi vowels (בבט עראקי ונקט עראקי) (ln. 30), and a codex of the Targum of the Prophets as written in Iraqi script (ln. 28). The same inventory describes a book whose title is not preserved as written in Maghrebi script (בבט מגרבי) (ln. 27). It is clear that 'Iraqi' and 'Maghrebi' define the consonantal script. Another Iraqi volume is described in Bodl. MS Heb d 66.131–132 (ln. 3). Here it refers to the Targum of the *Haftarot* to the Torah in hard binding, valued at the relatively high price of two dinars.

The distinction between two geographical sub-types of Hebrew script in the Islamic world echoes the distinction between two main groups of Arabic script. The calligraphy styles that developed in the Abbasid East differ from the rounded, more cursive, though still calligraphic, scripts that developed in the Maghreb from the tenth century onwards (Bongianino 2022). The birth of the Maghrebi Arabic script is sometimes described as the first breach in the graphic unity of the Islamic world (Déroche 2001, 61). Applied to Hebrew, the distinction between Iraqi, i.e., Eastern, and Maghrebi, i.e., Western, script types reflects the split, attested from ca 1000 in Hebrew script in the Islamicate world. While the calligraphic forms transmitted from Iraqi centres spread westwards, new styles, especially the cursive script, come into being in the Muslim West: North Africa and, later, Muslim Iberia.

as Iraqi (עראקי), but it is unclear whether the reference is to Iraqi paper or script.

4.7. Handwriting

The most frequent references to writing in the lists from the Cairo Geniza concern individual scribes' handwriting, rather than a typological definition of the script.¹³ Some list writers, e.g., BL Or 10118.1 and Bodl. MS Heb f 36.99, including Joseph Rosh ha-Seder in ENA 2539 (ln. 27), mention that they copied the books in question in person (*bi-khatti* 'in my handwriting'). Some books are listed as being copied by family members, without specifying their names: a thirteenth-century inventory, ENA 1290.7r (ln. 1) lists a Sefer Torah in 'my brother's hand' ([מצח]ף תורה בט אבי), and another codex copied by the same scribe containing two biblical books, BL Or 10118.1, mentions a book in 'my father's hand', and T-S K3.25-26 (lns 12, 16), twice a book 'in my grandfather's hand', showing that libraries, bookselling, and book copying were transgenerational family business.

Some descriptions contain the names of scribes. Among them, some are mentioned informally, by their first names, such as ENA 2687.1, whose four items, one of them a Bible and a Megilla (scroll of Esther), were copied by 'Joseph', whereas another by a person described more honorifically as al-shaikh Abū al-Dabī

¹³ T-S NS 312.84, lns 37, 40–41; ENA 2687.1, lns 7–8, 14, 15, 16, 18; Mosseri I.106, lns 6, 9, 21; T-S K3.25-26, lns 12–16; T-S Ar. 51.89, ln. 11; BL Or. 10118.1, ln. 10; Bodl. MS Heb f 36.99, ln. 16; T-S Ar. 51.79, lns 26, 31; T-S NS 228.3, lns 8–9; ENA 2687.6, lns 4, 14, 15, 105; Bodl. MS Heb d 66.131–132, ln. 36; ENA 1290.7, lns 1–2; T-S 10 K 20.4, lns 2–3; Bodl. MS Heb f 56.50, ln. 18; RNL Evr-Ar I 127, fol. 1r, ln. 11; ENA 2539, lns 27, 76; T-S K6.170, lns 1, 19, 36, 40, 130; T-S K3.42, lns 4, 10.

(lns 7–8, 14, 16, 18; Abū al-Dabī, ln. 15). TS NS 228.3 mentions a *daftar* of Alfasi to the tractates Baba Qamma, Baba Meṣia and Baba Batra (*Hilkhot talatha babot*) in the handwriting of R. Isaac ben Hadādah. It is likely that these informal mentions refer to contemporaries and neighbours of the list's writer. Some scribes were local Egyptian scholars known from other Geniza documents. A certain R. Zakkai must have been a popular scribe, as he is mentioned in five different book lists, sometimes as a scribe of more than one item.¹⁴ This Zakkai is probably Zakkai ben Moshe, attested in documents dated to between 1127 and 1150. He was a *dayyan* 'judge', but also a scribe and a bookseller in the town of al-Mahalla, situated in the Nile delta. His activity as a professional scribe is revealed in T-S 13 J20.11, a letter in which he discusses the parchment exemplar of a *Tafsīr* of the Pentateuch that he undertook to create for the price of three dinars, but which he eventually completed at the discounted price of two and a half dinars. He was deeply unsatisfied with this salary, and complained that writing an Arabic translation was as time-consuming and complex as copying a vocalised Bible (Goiten 1967–1988, II:238, 540 fn. 50).

A few books in the inventories are described as written by a great scholar or scribe of the past. In T-S K6.170, Joseph Rosh ha-Seder mentions a copy of the Responsa in the handwriting of the Geonim (ln. 1). The aforementioned inventory of Fustat's Babylonian synagogue dating to 1080, T-S 20.47 (ln. 30), describes a *maṣḥaf* of the Torah in which there is a mention (דכר,

¹⁴ T-S Ar. 51.79, lns 26, 31); ENA 2687.6, lns 4, 104; Bodl. MS Heb f 56.50, ln. 18; ENA 2539, ln. 76; T-S K3.42, lns 4, 10.

perhaps a colophon?) that it was copied in the handwriting of Rabbenu Sa'adya. This is almost certainly Sa'adya Gaon himself. It should be noted that the inventory is cautious about this identification: rather than stating explicitly that the volume is in Sa'adya's hand, it says 'a volume of the Torah, a דָּכָר that it is in the hand of Rabbenu Sa'adya, and, at its end, there are papers in the hand of Ben al-Aqta'. Bodl. MS Heb d 66.131–132 (ln. 36) mentions a book in the handwriting of R. Nissim b. Jacob of Qayruan, followed by the formula for the dead. ENA 2687.1 (ln. 8) lists a *maṣḥaf* with the Targum and *Haftarot*, in the handwriting of Ibn Jāma' 'the Gatherer, Compiler'. This may be Samuel ben Jacob from Gabes in Tunisia, active in the middle of the twelfth century. He authored several works, some preserved in manuscripts, such as a halakhic work on ritual slaughter, and an addition to the *Sefer he-'Arukh* by Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome, known by the Hebrew title 'Agur, the exact equivalent of the Arabic al-Jāma'. The manuscript transmission of the 'Agur confirms that Samuel ben Jacob al-Jāma' was a scribe as well as author. Although no autograph is preserved, it appears that the 'Agur was originally appended to a copy of the 'Arukh that al-Jāma' copied and provided with a scribe's preface (reproduced in three later manuscripts). In our list, he appears as a scribe, and we see that he was able to copy biblical manuscripts, too.

The handwriting of a famous scribe or an autograph of an important author would be a prized possession of any bibliophile. It would also increase the commercial value of the volumes. Joseph Rosh ha-Seder was the fortunate owner of original copies of Moses Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah*. In T-S K6.170, he mentions

this precious book no fewer than four times (lns 36, 40, 122–30, and 223). First, he outlines his plan to create new exemplars of the *Mishneh Torah* (אלחבור), using the autograph (כט אלמולף) as the model. One set is supposed to contain twelve bound volumes of in-quarto Baghdadi paper, with forty lines of writing per page (ln. 36), another set fourteen bound volumes of Baghdadi paper, one per book, with 23 lines per page (ln. 40), and another, a series of fourteen volumes, this time in-octavo (lns 161–69).¹⁵ In two instances, Joseph Rosh ha-Seder gives a price of a complete *Mishneh Torah* copied from the autograph: fourteen bound in-octavo volumes on Baghdadi paper with 23 lines per page are evaluated at an enormous sum of 100 Egyptian dinars (lns 122–130), while another similar set fetches a much lesser, but still substantial price of 35 dinars (lns 216–223).

4.8. Summary

To conclude, the lists of books drawn up by booksellers, scribes, and bibliophiles discovered in the Cairo Geniza provide unprecedented information about the quality, type, and origin of the script, as well as the handwriting of specific named scribes. While the lists do not attempt a systematic typology, some of them distinguish different Oriental subtypes (Iraqi and Maghrebi), and others distinguish different script modes: *mujlas* (square), *muḥaqqaq* (calligraphic square), *muʿallaq* (non-square or cursive),

¹⁵ Other planned copies of *Mishneh Torah* are mentioned in lns 45–48, 92, 145, with no reference to model, but presumably to be copied from the exemplar in Maimonides's hand.

mashq (non-square), *raqīq* (non-square), and, perhaps, also *mu-jarrad* (simple, unvocalised script). The frequent listing of the names of the scribes, and the particular intellectual and economic importance attached to the handwriting of famous individuals reveals the role played by script in the bookish culture of the classical Geniza society in eleventh-to-thirteenth-century Egypt.

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GENIZA BOOK LISTS AS INDIRECT SOURCES OF MEDIEVAL JEWISH BOOK HISTORY IN THE NEAR EAST*

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To Geoffrey Khan, my Doktorvater, in gratitude and appreciation

The *geniza* chamber of the Ben Ezra synagogue and other places in Old Cairo, which came to the attention of European scholars in the second half of the nineteenth century, yielded a massive corpus of more than 350,000 fragments of manuscripts and documents, most of which date from the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods (tenth–thirteenth centuries CE). This constitutes unique evidence of the massive production of Jewish books and of their extensive readership. Most importantly, books were deposited in the Cairo Geniza indiscriminately, regardless of their text, format, size, or quality. In consequence, the *geniza* presents a ‘stratigraphic’ cross section through all layers of medieval society and

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furnishes evidence of books for all kinds of readers, budgets, and occasions. At least 95 percent of individual fragments from the Cairo Geniza come from books. The use of the fragments to reconstruct bookmaking techniques and book history in general is difficult due to their poor state of fragmentary preservation and the frequent dispersal of the parts of the same book in different collections. These sources constitute direct evidence for Jewish book history in the Near East. As well as these direct sources, other fragments of documentary evidence from the Cairo Geniza add indirectly to our understanding of medieval Jewish book production and book trade, such as letters recording the purchase of books or their availability (or, at times, unavailability), contracts relating to the employment of scribes (see, e.g., Outhwaite 2018), accounts of religious foundations mentioning books dedicated to synagogues and houses of learning, and notes and records of booksellers.¹ The book lists, discussed here, are part of these indirect sources.

The book lists from the Cairo Geniza constitute a heterogeneous group of documents.² They differ in both function and layout. What they have in common, however, is that they provide

¹ The majority of medieval Jewish book lists stem from the Cairo Geniza. Only a handful of book lists are known from the Firkovitch collections; see NLR Yevr.-Arab. I 127, fol. 1a (Allony 95) and Yevr.-Arab. I 2524, fol. 1 (recto and verso), by Abraham b. Moses b. Samuel ha-Levi ha-Šuḥnī, active in Jerusalem during the second half of the fourteenth century. On the latter manuscript, see Schwarb and Iopollo (2024).

² This is not the place to give a history of research, but the reader is referred to Frenkel (2017) for an overview. A substantial number of book lists have been edited—or re-edited—in Allony et al. (2006).

information—in greater or lesser detail—on physical copies of books. Some consist of inventories of private or public libraries. The former register books in libraries of specific professionals, such as scribes, cantors, and physicians, while the latter usually list the holdings of synagogues. Others were produced by Jewish *warrāqūn* ‘stationers’, book and paperware merchants. *Warrāqūn* belonged to the literary elite network of makers, sellers, buyers, collectors, and readers of books. Some book lists are lending lists or lists of books that served as collateral for loans. In addition, lists according to thematic subject or written by a specific author (*fahāris*) are found. The items listed give insight into the contents of the Jewish bookshelf in the medieval Near East, what communities and individuals desired to obtain and to read. They not only help us understand which texts scholars had at their disposal and used to shape their intellectual output, but also help us estimate the size of public collections and the book economy.

Whereas most of the fragments are in Hebrew script, some are in Arabic³ or use both scripts.⁴ In terms of their *mise-en-page*, the majority register copies of books with no dividers between

Wherever in this contribution a reference is given to a list edited in this publication, the number is added in parentheses. Further book lists have been identified and will be supplemented with an English translation and become part of the database produced in the project mentioned above.

³ Such as T-S Misc. 24.28 (Arabic poetic anthologies); T-S Ar. 20.5 (a report of a *warrāq* or bookbinder); T-S AS 181.79 (mentioning the epistles of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*); T-S Ar. 42.76 (listing medical works); and T-S 38.29 (a lending list of medical works).

⁴ E.g., T-S NS J 585 (Allony 3); T-S AS 117.32; AIU V.B.49.

them, on a new line, or using rudimentary blank spaces, while others add graphic elements to distinguish items,⁵ enumerate them with Hebrew numerals,⁶ or structure the list by demarcating horizontal lines.⁷ Not only in their function and layout, but also in terms of provenance and context, the Cairo Geniza book lists are multifarious. The majority of the book lists are, unsurprisingly, of Jewish provenance and feature mostly Jewish books. However, some book lists are—as can be deduced from their content and on the basis of the names of their owners—likely of non-

⁵ ENA 2687.1 (Allony 7), T-S 10K20.7 (Allony 16), Bodl MS Heb f 36.99 (Allony 23), T-S 10 K 20.6 (Allony 24), Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 (Allony 40), and ENA 3774.10 (Allony 60) divide the items by using a colon. T-S Misc. 36.150 (Allony 30) divides items with a sign that resembles an encircled dot, which originated in the Arabic letter *hā'* for *intahā* 'concluded', known also in the Islamic tradition (see Gacek 2009, 269). ENA 2687.3 (Allony 104, wrongly listed as ENA 2687.36) lists a new item with the formula *ka-dhālik* 'and likewise' and T-S K3.44 (Allony 101) with *wa-dūnahu* 'and further'.

⁶ For example, T-S 16.19 (Allony 8), T-S K3.26, verso (Allony 12, wrongly referred to as T-S K3.27), T-S Ar. 51.80 (Allony 15), T-S 10K20.7 (Allony 16), T-S NS 298.9 (Allony 27), T-S NS J 125 (Allony 32), ENA 1290.2 (Allony 34), ENA 2687.4 (Allony 35), T-S Ar. 51.79 (Allony 38), T-S K3.14 (Allony 43), T-S K3.44 (Allony 101), T-S NS 309.65 (Allony 103), and T-S NS J126 (Allony 114, referred to as T-S NS J 94.126).

⁷ T-S NS J 585 (Allony 3), T-S Misc. 36.149 (Allony 31), ENA 2687.6 (Allony 44), and T-S NS J126 (Allony 114, referred to as T-S NS J 94.126).

Jewish provenance.⁸ What is more, they quite frequently list non-Jewish books. Arabic translations of Greek scientific or philosophical works appear frequently, including Hippocrates or Galen (see Tarras f.c.). AIU V.B.49, for example, lists *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* ‘The Limit of Advance [lit. Steps] in the Science of Theology’ by al-Shahrastānī (1086–1153 CE), one of the standard works of post-Avicennan *Ash‘ari Kalām*. Within that group, books on medicine hold a special position. By far the most popular medical treatise attested is *Al-Kitāb al-Manṣūrī fī al-Ṭibb* ‘The Book on Medicine for Mansur’ by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā’ al-Rāzī (d. ca 925 CE).⁹ In a list by Joseph Rosh ha-Seder this work is explicitly named in the category of ‘elementary copies’ (*al-nusakh al-aṣliya*), listing what we may assume was required reading.¹⁰ Ibn Sīnā’s (980–1037 CE) *Al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* ‘Canon of Medicine’ and Abū Ja‘far ibn al-Jazzār’s (d. 1004/5 CE) *Zād al-Musāfir*

⁸ E.g., T-S Misc. 24.28, listing Arabic poetic anthologies (see Hirschler 2022), or T-S Ar. 42.76, where the books and the transfer of their ownership to a certain Ibrāhīm Sa‘d Allāh is mentioned.

⁹ Listed in T-S Misc. 36.148 (Allony 98), T-S K3.44 (Allony 101), ENA 2687.3 (Allony 104, wrongly referred to as ENA 2687.36), L-G Talm. II.30 (Allony 107), T-S NS 308.39 (Allony 109), T-S K3.1 (Allony 113), ENA 2687.1 (Allony 7), T-S Misc. 36.147 (Allony 4), T-S NS 312.84 (Allony 5), T-S Ar. 51.89 (Allony 20), T-S 16.284 (Allony 68), and Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 (Allony 40). Further, *Al-Ṭibb al-Rūḥānī* ‘Spiritual Medicine’ by al-Rāzī is listed in Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 (Allony 40) and T-S NS J 173 (Allony 64). *Al-Mantiq al-Kabīr* ‘Major Book on Logic’ by the same author is featured in T-S Misc. 36.147 (Allony 4), Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 (Allony 40), and T-S NS J 173 (Allony 64).

¹⁰ T-S K3.44 (Allony 101).

wa-Qūt al-Ḥāḍir ‘Viaticum’ also appear in several lists.¹¹ Many of these works were considered standard reading for Jewish physicians. The presence of such books indicates that they circulated among members of the medical profession, Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike, all of whom were, for example, equally high in rank in governmental service. Among the listed books one also finds Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq’s (808–873 CE) *Masā’il fī al-Ṭibb* ‘Medical Problems’, as well as Ibn Buṭlān’s (d. 1066 CE) *Da‘wat al-’Aṭibbā* ‘The Physicians’ Dinner Party’, copies of which have survived in the Cairo Geniza itself (Szilágyi 2006).

Although the most elementary entry described in a book list is always the physical instantiation of a given work, research has tended to concentrate on the bibliographical information encompassed: the titles and author attributions. Most representative is the approach of Adler and Broydé (1901, 52), who claim that the book list is “intrinsically of considerable importance, because it introduces us to a large number of unknown works by writers.” This is justified in light of the ongoing need to chart medieval Jewish literature, especially in areas that have received comparatively little attention, such as Judaeo-Arabic literature.

¹¹ The ‘Canon’ by Ibn Sīnā is found in Bodl MS Heb d 44.83–84 (Allony 112), Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 (Allony 40), T-S K3.26 (Allony 12, wrongly referred to as T-S K3.27), and T-S NS J 173 (Allony 64). Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Khālīd ibn al-Jazzār, like Dūnash ibn Tamīm, was a pupil of Isaac Israeli, i.e., Ishāq ibn Sulaymān al-Isrā’īlī (mid-ninth century, after 932 CE). His ‘Viaticum’ is listed in T-S 10 K 20.9/T-S Misc. 36.147 (Allony 4), T-S NS J 173 (Allony 64), and T-S Misc. 36.148 (Allony 98).

The present contribution, however, examines the physical appearance of books and the way this is represented in the book lists. The items listed usually include four types of information, in varying degrees of detail, and this treatment explores each in turn. First, the items provide codicological definition, i.e., whether the book is in the form of a scroll, *rotulus*, or codex. This is followed, second, by information on the type of manuscript: a single manuscript, a multi-text manuscript, or a compilation (*majmūʿ*) of sorts. Third, information on the content is found, including the type of composition, e.g., a monothematic monograph (*kitāb*), a translation of a work (*tarjama*), an exegetical work (*tafsīr* or *sharḥ*), a propaedeutic treatise (*madkhal*), or a glossary (*sharḥ al-alfāz*). On this level the title of the work is included as well, and also the name of the author, which is usually indicated by a genitive construction or the particle *li-* ‘by’. Fourth, a physical description is added: dimensions, writing material, quires, script definition, text layout, rubrication, and binding. Some lists—although this is not a focus here—add prices to the listed items.

1.0. Codicological Definition

Most bibliographic entries define the codicological format of the book. The three basic categories are scroll, *rotulus*, and codex. In the case of the latter, several subcategories exist.

1.1. *Majalla* and *Sifr* ‘scroll’

The term מגילה (Hebr. *megilla*) or אלמגילה (read as either *al-megilla* or *al-majalla*) may refer, as is customary, to one of the Five Scrolls

and, in particular, if unspecified, to the scroll of Esther.¹² Further, מגלה is the name of the tenth tractate of the Mishna in the order Mo'ed.¹³ Although these uses make up the greater part of attestations of this term, they are not at issue here. Rather, our concern is with how the book lists refer to horizontal, liturgical scrolls. When the word מגלה, whether reflecting its Hebrew or Arabicised form, is listed in the vicinity of other liturgical scrolls, such as Torah and *Haftarot* scrolls, we may assume that it refers to a scroll, e.g., וספרין ואפטארה ומגלה 'two Torah scrolls, a *Haftara* scroll, and a *Megilla*' (T-S K3.1 [Allony 113], recto, ln. 33) and ואלמגלה אלגויל ענדי 'a *Megilla* on *gevil* [animal hide] is with me' (T-S NS 309.65 [Allony 103], recto, lns 17–18).

Equally ambiguous is the term ספר, which can be read either as *sefer* in Hebrew or as *sifr*, the Arabic loanword derived from it (see Jeffery 1938, 170–71). In most cases it occurs in the title of books, e.g., *Sefer ha-Galui* by Sa'adya Gaon, or designating biblical books, in particular one of five books of the Torah (see §3.2.2). In certain contexts, however, the book lists attest to the rabbinic use of ספר, referring to a horizontal Torah scroll for liturgical use; e.g., in a list by Joseph Rosh ha-Seder, וספרין

¹² See, for example, ומגלת אסתר (T-S NS 312.84 [Allony 5], verso, ln. 12); ודפתר פיה אל תלאת מגלאת והי איכה ורות ושיר השירים (T-S K3.27 [Allony 11, wrongly referred to as T-S K3.25–26], recto, lns 15–16); כתא' (T-S NS 298.33 [Allony 100, wrongly referred to as T-S NS 298.3], verso, ln. 8).

¹³ E.g., גזו מסכת חגיגה ומשקין ומגילה ירושלמי, 'a *juz*' of the tractates *Hagiga*, *Mashqin* (i.e., *Mo'ed Qatan*), and *Megilla*, according to the Palestinian Talmud' (T-S Misc. 36.150 [Allony 30], verso, ln. 16).

ואפטארתין ‘two scrolls of the Torah and two scrolls of the *Haftara*’ (T-S K6.170 [Allony 99], fol. 2r, on the upper margin, ln. 10).¹⁴

As one of the examples above shows (T-S NS 309.65), an indirect identification of a horizontal scroll in the corpus can be made based on the writing material used, i.e., *gevil* ‘animal hide’ (see §4.1). What is more, liturgical scrolls of the book of Psalms are attested (see §3.2.3).

1.2. *Darj* ‘*rotulus*’

Rotuli are indicated by the term *darj* (דרג).¹⁵ Most attestations use the term in reference to liturgical texts, e.g., ודרג סליחות ‘and a *rotulus* with *Qinot*’ (T-S 10 K 20.4 [Allony 50], recto, ln. 2), or to geonic responsa, e.g., דרג תשובת שאלות ‘a *rotulus* with responsa’ (Bodl MS Heb d 66.131–132 [Allony 46], fol. 1v, ln. 25) and ודרג

¹⁴ In the famous letter from the Karaite Jews of Ashqelon to the Karaites and Rabbanites of Fustat on the ransoming of captives and books from the Crusaders (T-S 10J5.6 + T-S 20.113; Goitein 1952; Gil 1983), the Torah scrolls are referred to as ספרי תורות (T-S 20.113, recto, ln. 39).

¹⁵ Regarding Hebrew texts, there is evidence that the Arabic term *darj* corresponds to the rabbinic תכריך, referring to a *rotulus* as book format. This is notably evident in a Judaeo-Arabic glossary translating *takhrikh* across various tractates of the Mishna as *darj*. Three bifolios, dated from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, have been discovered (T-S Ar. 5.13, T-S Ar. 31.231, fol. 2, and T-S NS 302.76). Fragment T-S Ar. 5.13 specifically contains pertinent entries from m. B. Metz. 1.8 (see Olzowy-Schlanger 2016; f.c.). *Rotuli* were also used in the Islamic tradition, e.g., for the Qurʾān, as evinced in the Qubbat al-khazna corpus (Ory 1965; D’Ottone Rambach 2022; Gözeler 2022). For non-Qurānic *rotuli*, see Khoury (1986).

אֶכָּר לְרַבֵּנוּ שְׁרִירָא ‘another *rotulus* by Sherira Gaon’ (same list, fol. 2r, ln. 2).¹⁶

1.3. *Muṣḥaf* ‘codex’

Muṣḥaf specifies a book format built from leaves, arranged into quires, i.e., a codex.¹⁷ Outside the corpus of book lists, the term *muṣḥaf* is well attested in Jewish contexts, both in colophons and documentary texts.¹⁸ It is often, but not exclusively, found connected to biblical books, in particular the Torah (מצחף תורה) and rabbinic texts.¹⁹ For example, ואנצאף אלי זלך מצחף תורה צגיר מלוח ‘and added to this, a codex, in the *ṣaghūr* ‘small’ format, with a wooden cover’ (Bodl MS Heb f 56.50 [Allony 81], verso, ln. 16) or מצחף מקרא נביאים כאמל ‘a codex of the Torah and the Prophets, in the *kāmīl* (‘full’) format’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, ln. 3).

¹⁶ Geonic responsa, like the ones mentioned here, are attested on *rotuli* (Chwat 2016).

¹⁷ The term itself is a loanword from Ge‘ez and became a preferred designation of Qurānic codices in Islamic practice (Jeffery 1938, 129–93; see also Leslau 1991, 552).

¹⁸ There are many examples, most prominently the famous Masoretic codices, that could be mentioned, e.g., the Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus (MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Yevr. I B 3) on fol. 223r and the Codex Leningradensis (MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Yevr. I B 19a) on fol. 474r. It should, however, also be noted that the colophons use other terms to refer to the book format of a codex. In Hebrew the term מחזור *mahzor* is used (see Glatzer 1989, 260–63), and the term *daftar* (see §1.4) also occurs frequently.

¹⁹ References to מצחף נביאים ‘a codex containing the Prophets’ and מצחף כתובים ‘a codex containing the Writings’ also exist.

In the book lists, the term *muṣḥaf* may—but does not necessarily—imply that the quires are held together by a form of binding or a cover (see below, §4.10). For example, one list specifies ‘a parchment codex, bound, containing a commentary on the tractates Sukka, Rosh Hashana, Mashqin (i.e., Mo‘ed Qaṭan) and Yom Tov (i.e., Betza)’ (T-S NS 298.33 [Allony 100, wrongly referred to as T-S NS 298.3], recto, ln. 10), while another has ‘a codex of the Torah, with a wooden cover’ (T-S K3.45 [Allony 71], recto, ln. 2).

In some cases, however, a codex is specified as having no binding at all, e.g., ‘a codex, without binding, containing the tractate Berakhot’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, lns 13–14) or ‘a codex, unbound, containing the tractates Rosh Hashana and Kippurim (i.e., Yoma)’ (same list, fol. 1r, ln. 9).

1.4. *Daftar* ‘codex’

Another term used for multi-quire codices is *daftar*, derived from Greek *διφθέρα* (Gacek 2001, 47; 2009, 63). It seems to have originally designated a particular kind of animal hide, in which meaning it is discussed in rabbinic literature (see Liebermann 1965, 205–8; Reed 1972, 97). Examples in book lists include ‘a *daftar* containing a commentary on the book of Genesis and a *daftar* containing a commentary on the book of Job’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1v, ln. 3) and ‘a *daftar* containing the three

tractates of Sukka, Mashqin (i.e., Mo'ed Qaṭan), and Yom Tov (i.e., Betsa)' (ENA 4011.71, recto, col. 1, lns 13–15).

The term may refer to either a bound codex—e.g., ודפתר באחמר פיה צלאת ר' סעדיה ז"ל צגיר מגלד 'a *daftar* in the *ṣaghīr* format, bound in red leather, containing the Siddur of Sa'adya Gaon, may his memory be a blessing' (T-S K3.41 [Allony 22], fol. 1v, lns 16–17)—or an unbound codex—e.g., דפתר גיר כתאב אלותאיק לרב האי 'a *daftar*, unbound, containing the Book of Documents (*kitāb al-wathā'iq*) by Hay Gaon' (T-S K3.32 [Allony 65], fol. 1v, lns 2–3).

Colophons and ownership notes in early Masoretic codices use the terms *muṣḥaf* and *daftar* interchangeably. Since they are distinguished in the book lists and other documentary sources,²⁰ however, the question arises as to what sets them apart. Previous research has suggested that *daftar* may designate a codex that is unbound (Outhwaite 2020, 70; Beit-Arié 2021, 43 fn. 13). The book lists do not support this assumption, as both terms occur in connection with either bound or unbound books (see above). They seem rather to indicate that the distinction lies in content and, probably, quality of production. *Muṣḥaf* is frequently found for books of the Bible, as stated above. This corresponds to Muslim usage, in which the term refers to Qurānic codices. What is more, the biblical manuscripts described by the term *muṣḥaf* are often valuable Masoretic codices, with full vocalisation, arranged in columns, in larger dimensions, and, as we may assume, calligraphic in their script. These codices would constitute works of a

²⁰ For example, the letter on the ransoming of captives and books from the Crusaders discussed in fn. 14.

higher quality and with a higher cost of production (including the costs of the writing material and fees for a professional scribe). The term *daftar* for biblical books is attested, but not very frequently. One of the rare occurrences is דפתר איוב ומשלי 'a *daftar* containing the book of Job and the book of Proverbs' (T-S Misc. 36.147 [Allony 4], fol. 2v, lns 12–13). Similarly, T-S K6.45 (Allony 1) opens with תבת אלדפאתר אלמבארכה מן דלך תורה מתרגם מגרד 'a list of the blessed *daftars*, which include: a Torah; a Targum in a simple, undotted script; Prophets, bound with a torn leather binding; Writings, bound with a torn leather binding' (fol. 1v, lns 1–3). What emerges, however, from this list is that the copies described are of lesser quality. The script is specified as being simple and undotted (*mujarrad*), the binding as partly damaged.²¹

Thus, in contrasting *daftar* to *muṣḥaf*, which refers to higher quality copies, the former seems to designate more casual, inexpensive, and user-produced codices.

2.0. Manuscript Type

The second kind of information that can be found in book lists is a specification of the type of manuscript listed. The main distinction between a single manuscript, i.e., a copy consisting of a codicological unit containing a single textual unit, and a copy that gathers or compiles multiple textual units. The latter can be referred to as multi-text manuscripts, as they may result from the practices of summarising, selecting, and/or excerpting.

²¹ On the term *mujarrad*, see Olszowy-Schlanger's contribution in this volume.

2.1. Single-text Manuscripts

2.1.1. *Juz* 'single-quire booklet; stand-alone component'

The term *juz* is very common in the book lists and can have several meanings (Hirschler 2011, 128). It can refer to a specific textual unit, literally designating part of a text (see §3.2). However, it is also quite frequently found in the technical meaning of an independent single-quire booklet, composed of up to 40 folia (Humbert 1988; Orsatti 1993, 275–77; Déroche and Berthier 2006, 266; Gacek 2009, 23, 63), e.g., 'ומאסרה פי גזו כביר, the Masorah in a large *juz*' (T-S 10 K 20.4 [Allony 50], recto, ln. 4), גזו 'a *juz*' containing a glossary' (T-S NS J 53 [Allony 6, referred to as T-S NS J 94.53], fol. 1r, lns 5–6), and גזו שאלות 'a *juz*' with geonic responsa' (Bodl MS Heb d 66.68 [Allony 10], fol. 1r, ln. 20–21). The term may further refer to stand-alone parts of larger works or even compilations (§2.2)—as distinct from more complete versions—that circulated as separate quires, seemingly detached and mostly unbound.²² In this meaning it is found in גזו מן תפסיר קוהלת 'a *juz*' from a commentary on Qohelet' (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 2v, lns 6–7) and גזו כביר תפסיר ויקרא 'a large *juz*' containing a commentary on Leviticus' (T-S Misc. 36.149 [Allony 31], fol. 3v, ln. 12).

²² In the whole corpus, the term *juz* is only rarely specified as being bound, e.g., גזו לטיף בגלד אסוד אבתדאה תפסיר 'a neat *juz*', with black binding, containing the beginning of a commentary' (T-S Misc. 36.149 [Allony 31], fol. 3v, ln. 10) or גזו לטיף מגלד מלוח ואבתדאה בשלשים ושתים נתיבות 'a neat *juz*', bound with a cover, and opening with *In Thirty-two Mysterious Paths of Wisdom* (i.e., *Sefer Yetsira*)' (lns 14–15).

2.1.2. *Kurrāsa* ‘single-quire book’

Another term that indicates a single-quire booklet is *kurrāsa* (Gacek 2009, 63). This use can be seen in 'בראסה ואחדה פיהא תפ' רות 'a single *kurrāsa*, containing a commentary on Ruth' (Bodl MS Heb f 22.25–52 [Allony 40], fol. 2r, lns 13–14).

2.2. Multi-text Manuscripts

Compilations or collections of textual units are called *majmū'* (מגמוע) or, rarely, *majmū'a* (מגמועה), e.g., 'מגמועה פיהא מאסראת' 'a *majmū'a* containing Masoretic notes' (ENA 2687.1 [Allony 7], verso, ln. 5).

The reference in מגמוע גטין פסחים שחיטת חולין נזיקים סדר נשים 'a compilation (*majmū'*) of the tractates Giṭṭin, Pesahim, Ḥullin, Neziqin, and from the order of Nashim, the laws of Qiddushin and some of Berakhot' (T-S Ar. 52.213 [Allony 17], recto, lns 10–12) seems to gather portions applicable to everyday life, such as marital status, dietary laws, and prayers. Some of the compilations appear to refer to personal, user-produced notes or study-books, such as מגמוע אולה 'a compilation, beginning with a midrash on the Song of Songs, in the handwriting of Rav Sa'adel' (T-S K6.170 [Allony 99], fol. 1v, ln. 4). Ezra b. Meir (thirteenth century CE) mentions among his books his private מגמוע בכטי על 'compilation in my handwriting on the *Halakhot Qeṭanot*' (BL Or 10118.1 [Allony 21], fol. 1r, lns 20–21).

At times, parts of a compilation, possibly in a separate quire, are listed as *juz'* (see above, §2.1.1): גוז מגמוע פיה כלאם לענן: 'a *juz'* of a compilation, containing the saying of Anan

and a number of other compositions' (ENA 2687.2 [Allony 28], recto, ln. 12) and *גזו מגמזע אולה אלמסתלחק* 'a *juz*' of a compilation, beginning with the Book of the Appendix (by Ibn Janāḥ)' (T-S Misc. 36.150 [Allony 30], recto, ln. 18).

3.0. Content Description

After the codicological definition is given and the type of manuscript specified, the book lists move from the level of the physical object to that of the textual units contained in them. They usually provide information on content. Therein the title and attribution to the author, using either a simple genitive construction or the preposition *li-*, are preceded by a specification of the type of composition and, if applicable, textual divisions. Lastly, the language of the composition may be specified.

3.1. Composition Type

In contrast to rabbinic literature—which had been distinguished by a fabric of ongoing discourse, exposition, and argument, rather than being organised according to disciplines as articulated branches of knowledge—in medieval Jewish literature, disciplines of learning emerged, such as linguistic thought (grammars and dictionaries), legal and calendrical compendia, theology, philosophy, and biblical exegesis (often with many subcategories), using a new technical and exegetical terminology. Moreover, particular text types emerged, each with its own structure, textual practices, and Arabic designations; these can also be found in contemporaneous non-Jewish literature. The distinctions also hint at specific functions, such as scholarly refutations,

propaedeutic works, and textbooks for private or communal study in the fields of exegesis, philosophy, medicine, and linguistic thought. The book lists often explicitly state composition type. Most common is the term *kitāb*, as in כתאב אלאימאן ‘the Book of Oaths’ (T-S K6.45 [Allony 1], fol. 1v, ln. 4) and כתאב אלרהן ‘the Book of Pawning (by Samuel b. Hofni Gaon)’ (T-S K6.45 [Allony 1], fol. 1v, ln. 4). The specific meaning seems to be that of a monothematic monograph, composed by a single scholar, with an elaborate and distinct title and a programmatic introduction outlining the content, structure, and purpose of the book.²³ What is meant here is a literary work, redacted according to a canon of stylistic rules and from the outset designed to be circulated in writing (Drory 1992; 2000, 126–46; Brody 1998, 249–66). Further, the book lists specify the text types of systematic commentaries (שרח or תפסיר), translations (תרגומה), glossaries (שרח), responsa (מסאיל), epistles (רסאלה), and scholarly refutations (רד). Other specifications point directly to a didactic context, such as abridgement and epitome (מכתצר), glosses or running notes (תעליק), propaedeutic works (מדכל), and textbooks (כנאש).

3.2. Textual Divisions

3.2.1. *Juz* ‘part of a text’

The term *juz* has several meanings, as noted above (§2.1.1), with the most basic one referring to a part of the text (Gacek 2009,

²³ On introductions, see Ben-Shammai (2004); Stroumsa (2007; 2012, and the references listed there); and Goldstein (2010).

57), e.g., וְגִזְוִין אַכְרֵי מִן כְּתָאב אֱלֵאמָאנָא (‘two last *juz*’ of the Book of Beliefs and Opinions (by Sa’adya Gaon)’ (T-S NS J 53 [Allony 6, referred to as T-S NS J 94.53], fol. 1r, ln. 13).²⁴

3.2.2. *Sifr* ‘biblical book; book in multi-book biblical work’

Further divisions usually appear regarding biblical books, in particular the Torah and the book of Psalms. The five books of the Torah are usually referred to by the term *sifr*, as in פִּירוּשׁ עַל־י אלתורה מִגִּלְד פִּיה סִפְרִין בְּרֵאשִׁית וּשְׁמוֹת לִר' בַּחֲיִי ‘a commentary on the Torah, bound, containing the two books (*sifrayn*) of Genesis and Exodus, by R. Bahya’ (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13], verso, lns 4–5), אֲלֻזּוֹ אֱלֵתָאנִי מִן אֱלִסְפֵּר אֱלֵאֻל מִן סְפֹר אֱלֵתוֹרָה ‘the second part of the first book of the (five) books of the Torah’ (T-S Misc. 36.149 [Allony 31], fol. 3v, ln. 11), and וַיֵּשֶׁב אֱלִי אַכְרֵי אֱלִסְפֵּר לְבֵן חֲפְנִי ‘a commentary on *parashah* וַיֵּשֶׁב to the end of the book (of Genesis) by Samuel b. Hofni’ (T-S K6.170 [Allony 99], recto, col. 2, ln. 5). As can be seen in these examples, the book lists reflect the geonic and Masoretic division of the five books of the Torah into two halves.

²⁴ Some scribes seem to be aware that the term *juz*’ is ambiguous. In NLR Yevr.-Arab. I 1369, fol. 183v, the colophon reads גִּזְוִי הָדָא אֲלֻזּוֹ ‘this *juz*’ of the composition was completed with his success, praise be to him’. The addition of *tašnīfan* ‘pertaining to the composition’ indicates that *juz*’ here refers to the textual and not codicological unit.

3.2.3. *Majalla* ‘scroll’

For the book of Psalms, the pre-Masoretic division into five books, mirroring the five books of the Torah, is also attested. The parts are most clearly listed in דפתר תפסיר מגלה יאמרו ‘a *daftar* containing a commentary on the scroll (with the fifth part of the book of Psalms) starting with יאמרו’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 2r, ln. 12), דפתר תפסיר מגלה אשרי ‘a *daftar* containing a commentary on the scroll (with the first part of the book of Psalms) starting with אשרי’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 2r, lns 12–13), תפלה [a *daftar*] containing a commentary on the scroll (with the fourth part of the book of Psalms) starting with תפלה’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 2r–v, lns 13–14), and דפתר תפסיר מגלה באייל ‘a *daftar* containing a commentary on the scroll (with the second part of the book of Psalms) starting with באייל’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 3r, lns 1–2). From other occurrences, such as תפסיר מגלותין מן תהלות ‘a commentary to two scrolls of (parts of) the book of Psalms’ (T-S Misc. 36.147 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, ln. 12) and שרח אלמגלה אלאולה מן אלמזאמיר ‘a commentary on the scroll, containing the first part of the book of Psalms’ (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13], verso, ln. 7), it becomes clear that the term מגלה must be read as Arabic *majalla* (see §1.1). It thus appears that these copies give evidence not only of the prevailing practice of dividing the book of Psalms into five parts, but also of the copying of these parts in horizontal scrolls, possibly with a liturgical function (Olszowy-Schlanger 2017, 50 fn. 2; Raziell-Kretzmer 2021).

3.3. Language

An item can be specified in terms of the language of text. For example, כת' בן גוריון 'responsa in Hebrew and Arabic' (T-S AS 55.46 [Allony 92], recto, lns 3–4).²⁵ אלעבראני refers to 'Sefer Jossipon in Hebrew' (T-S Misc. 36.148 [Allony 98], recto, col. 1, ln. 30), in contradistinction to the Judaeo-Arabic translation of this work. Compare ויקרא באלעבראני 'commentary on Leviticus, in Arabic' (Bodl MS Heb d 66.68 [Allony 10], recto, col. 1, ln. 30) and מגלת סתרים עבראניה וערבית 'Megillat Setarim, in Hebrew and in Arabic' (T-S NS 298.52 [Allony 26], recto, col. 2, ln. 3).

4.0. Physical Description

Turning back to the physical characteristics of a copy, book lists usually close with specifications of the writing material, dimensions, quires, ruling, script definition, text layout, rubrication, and binding. The lists composed by individuals in the book trade are exceedingly rich in terms of such information.

4.1. Writing Material

The three major kinds of writing material we encounter are *gevil*, parchment, and paper. What the authors of the book lists call *gevil* (גויל)—animal hides prepared according to the normative

²⁵ This is according to the rule that queries be answered in the language in which they are posed. See, for example, Harkavy (1887, cited according to <https://www.sefaria.org/texts>): וגם צוינו לכתב תשובתה בלשון ההגראים כאשר היא כתובה.

sources so as to ensure halakhically viable liturgical use—remains reserved for scrolls and occurs in a limited manner.²⁶ For items described using this term, consider גויל לספר תורה ‘Sefer Torah on *gevil*’ (T-S NS J126 [Allony 114, cited as T-S NS J 94.126], recto, col. 3, ln. 16), גויל אלאפטארה ‘the *Haftarot* on *gevil*’ (T-S Misc. 36.148 [Allony 98], recto, col. 2, ln. 4), and ומגלת אסתר פי גויל ‘the scroll of Esther on *gevil*’ (T-S K3.45 [Allony 71], recto, lns 4–5).²⁷

Raq (רק or רקוק) is the term commonly used to describe parchment copies, e.g., תורה תרגום רק קטע ‘the Torah, with Targum, on parchment, in the *qatʿ* format’ (on the *qatʿ* format, see §4.2; T-S Ar. 51.75 [Allony 69], recto, ln. 14), ודפתר פיה הלכות ‘a *daftar* containing *Hilkhot Reʿu*, on parchment’ (T-S K3.45 [Allony 71], recto, ln. 9).

Two terms were applied to paper. *Kāghad* (כאגד) is found in a handful of instances, such as כראס כאגד רבטה ואחדה ‘60 quires, composed of paper, in one bundle’ (ENA 2539.1 [Allony 97, cited as ENA 2539], verso, ln. 30) and תפסיר במדבר ונשא לר’ שמואל בן חפני ז”ל רבטתין כאגד בגדאדי ‘a commentary on *parashot* and במדבר, by R. Samuel b. Hofni, in two bundles, consisting of *baghdādī* paper’ (T-S C 2.146 [Allony 105], fol. 1r, ln. 5). More commonly, *waraq* (ורק, אוראק PL) is used: תפסיר אבר צגיר מעלק והו ‘another commentary, in a small format, copied in *muʿallaq* script, and it is on paper’ (T-S K3.14 [Allony 43], fol. 1v, l. 6).

²⁶ On the complexity of this term, see Olszowy-Schlanger (2017) and Rabin (2017), as well as the literature that they cite.

²⁷ On the identification of rabbinic *gevil* with a certain way of preparing leather, see—in addition to the references above—Haran (1985).

Additional characteristics of the paper beyond its dimensions (see §4.2) are also sometimes found specified, e.g., its age: ושרח האזינו 'a commentary on the *parashot* and האזינו זאת הברכה, by R. Moshe b. Sarjado, on old paper' (T-S NS 312.84 [Allony 5], recto, lns 7–8).

The book lists also attest to mixed quires, composed of both paper and parchment folios: וג' כראריס רק וכאגד פיהא בעץ מצנף פי 'three quires, composed of parchment and paper, containing parts of texts on *ṭerefot*' (Bodl MS Heb d 66:131–132 [Allony 46], fol. 2r, lns 13–14). Compare רבטה פיהא נצכה הלכת 'a bundle, containing a copy of the laws of slaughtering, a parchment copy, and copy consisting of paper and parchment, by R. Sa'adya Gaon' (Bodl MS Heb f 36.99 [Allony 23], recto, lns 2–3).

4.2. Dimensions

Connected to the writing material, as noted above, is information on book dimensions. A number of technical terms appear, in particular in the lists of professional copyists, to indicate the format of a book: *baghdādī* (with its subcategories of *qaṭ'*, *rub'*, and *thumn*, as well as *kāmil* and *nāqīṣ*) and *dimashqī*, *kabīr*, and *ṣaghīr*.²⁸ If we follow al-Qalqashandī's (d. 1418 CE) well-known administrative manual *Ṣubḥ al-ʿAshā fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshāʾ* 'Daybreak for the Night-Blind Regarding the Composition of Chancery Documents' (1963, 2:487–88, 4:189–96), ורק בגדאדי '*baghdādī* paper'

²⁸ On paper dimensions in the Islamic world, see Karabacek (1897 [1991], 64–70); Bosch et al. (1981, 31); Déroche and Berthier (2006, 51); Gacek (2009, 191–93).

refers to the largest paper size within that group. Consider also משתרא ורק בגדאדי עשרה ורקאת אלתמן ארבעה ונצף (T-S Misc. 8.45 [Allony 76], recto, lns 1–2), apparently referring to the acquisition of 10 sheets of *baghdādī* paper for the price of four and a half dirham (?). The lists of Joseph Rosh ha-Seder, among others, suggest that this format was used as the basis for producing quires in smaller formats by means of multiple folding: *qatʿ* (in folio, folded once), *rubʿ* (quarto, folded twice), and *thumn* (octavo, folded three times; Gacek 2001, 20, 52, 117). The use of *baghdādī* paper as the base can be seen in תקטיע רבע אלורק אלבגדאדי אלמקרא ‘in quarto (i.e., folded twice) of *baghdādī* paper, a Bible’ (ENA 2539.1 [Allony 97, cited as ENA 2539], verso, right margin, ln. 2). We can consider the specification of תפלת יום הכפורים ורקאה ‘a prayer for Yom Kippur and its paper is in folio, according to the *kāmīl* format’ (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13], fol. 6r, ln. 11). The next smallest size occurs in the same list as well: תפלת יום הכפורים בקר קטע אלרבע ‘[the prayer book for] the morning service of the Day of Atonement in quarto (*rubʿ*)’ (fol. 6v, ln. 1). The ensuing size, *thumn*, is the smallest, and seen in, e.g., ואלקאנון ‘the *Canon* [of *Medicine*, i.e., *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb*, by Ibn Sīnā], bound, in octavo [i.e., folded three times] of *baghdādī* paper, ruled’ (T-S K6.170 [Allony 99], fol. 2v, ln. 2).

As has been seen, folio size is at times further distinguished as *kāmīl*²⁹ or *nāqīṣ*. The latter is, according to al-Qalqashandī, of a smaller size (Gacek 2009, 192). This specification may be furnished separately in short form, e.g., מצחף מקרא נביאים כאמל, 'a codex of the Torah and Prophets in folio, according to the *kāmīl* format' (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, ln. 3) or מצחף פיה 'a codex of the Torah in folio, according to the *nāqīṣ* format' (Bodl MS Heb f 56.50 [Allony 81], recto, ln. 13).

Only once is the *dimashqī* size mentioned: דפתר פי ורק דמשקי 'a *daftar* on *dimashqī* paper' (T-S Misc. 36.149 [Allony 31], fol. 1r, ln. 5). Two further dimensions are termed *kabīr* and *ṣaghīr*. Exemplars of both are listed in דפאת מצחף צגיר פיה 'a codex of the Torah, according to the *kabīr* format, three columns, a codex of the Torah, according to the *ṣaghīr* format, three columns' (Bodl MS Heb f 56.49, recto, ln. 11). Al-Qalqashandī mentions *al-ṣaghīr*, also termed *al-āda*, as one of the smallest paper sizes (Gacek 2009, 192).

4.3. Quires

The designation *kurrās* (בראריס or כראס) 'quires' is among the most frequent terms in book lists. Their number may be specified, as in אדלאלה מן אלענק ובראסין מן אדלאלה 'four quires of the Book of the Necklace (by Judah b. al-Harizi), and two quires of the Guide of the Perplexed (by Maimonides)' (T-S AS 146.55 [Allony

²⁹ *Kāmīl*, when used in a non-technical manner, can signify completeness, e.g., אלמשנה כאמלה אלהלכות כאמלה 'the complete Mishna, the complete *Halakhot* (*Gedolot*?)' (T-S Misc. 36.148 [Allony 98], fol. 1v, lns 1–2).

91], recto, lns 1–2) and כראס בעץ מסאיל מן אלמקרא ‘a quire with some questions on the Torah’ (ENA2687.4 [Allony 35], recto, ln. 10). For the most part, such descriptions occur with no mention of binding, so that we must conclude that they circulated unbound, e.g., אכר כמסה כראריס נתר תלמוד נזיקים ‘another copy consisting of five unjoined quires with the tractate Neziqin’ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, ln. 12). Likewise, רזימה כראריס ופיהא סדר אלמשנה ‘parcel (*razīma*) of quires, containing the Mishna’ (ENA 1290.6 [Allony 2], recto, lns 2, 10).

A number of items list bundles of quires called *rabṭa*, e.g., רבטה באגד רבטה ואחדה ‘60 quires, composed of paper, in one bundle’ (ENA 2539.1 [Allony 97, cited as ENA 2539], verso, ln. 30) and רבטה כראריס אולהא תפסיר אבות ‘a bundle of quires, the first containing a commentary of the tractate Avot’ (T-S Misc. 36.148 [Allony 98], recto, col. 2, ln. 18); it lists dozens of bundles. As the basic meaning of the root (*rbṭ*) indicates binding or tying together, this practice may entail the temporary stitching (tacketing) of quires.

4.4. Ruling

Joseph Rosh ha-Seder frequently refers directly to ruling by means of the term *taṣṭīr* and indirectly by means of *maṣṭara* ‘ruling board’. He indicates either the absence of ruling—e.g., בגיר תססיר עלי אי מסטרה ‘without ruling by means of any *maṣṭara*’ (ENA 2539.1 [Allony 97, cited as ENA 2539], fol. 2r, right margin, ln.

7)—or the presence thereof—e.g., מסטרה ארבעין סטר ‘by a *maṣṭara* in 40 lines’ (l. 3).³⁰

4.5. Vocalisation

Naqt is the term used to indicate vocalisation, e.g., ואכתלאף בן ‘the differences between Ben Asher and Ben Naftali, in the *mujallis* script, vocalised correctly’ (T-S NS 312.84 [Allony 5], verso, lns 22–23). Conversely, *bi-ghayr naqt* indicates absence of vocalisation, e.g., ומצחף תורה מלוח ג ‘a codex containing the Torah, with a cover, three columns, unvocalised’ (T-S 20.47 [Allony 80], recto, lns 20–21). If further details are given, two types of vocalisation are distinguished, namely, ‘*irāqī* ‘Babylonian’ and *shāmī* or *ṭabarānī* ‘Tiberian’, e.g., ומצחף כתיב בכטעראקי ונקט עראקי ‘a codex written in Babylonian script and Babylonian vocalisation’ (T-S 20.47 [Allony 80], recto, ln. 30). The same list also mentions תורה עראקי בנקט ‘a Babylonian Torah, with Tiberian vocalisation’ (recto, lns 16–17).

4.6. Script

The script, whether Hebrew or Arabic, is specified only as a means of disambiguation. ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā’s (d. 1010 CE) *Tadhkirat al-Kahḥālīn* ‘The Reminder of the Oculists’ (erroneously attributed to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq), is listed in Mosseri I. 106.1 (Allony 9, cited as Mosseri I. 106), recto, col. 2, lns 15–16. That this particular

³⁰ It is unclear whether כראריס נפץ (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, ln. 2), which may exhibit an alternate spelling of *naḥdh* ‘awling’, indicates pricking.

copy is in Hebrew letters is indicated by the addition ‘in Hebrew script’ (כֵּט עֵבְרָאִי), a practice also known from other transcriptions from Arabic into Hebrew script, used to transmit works on medicine, astronomy and astrology, philosophy, geometry, and meteorology, as well as various almanacs and grammatical texts to a Jewish readership (Steinschneider 1883; Langermann 1996; Szilágyi 2006; Vidro and Kasher 2014). An example of the contrary, referring either to an Arabic translation of the Torah in Arabic script or the Hebrew text of the Torah in Arabic script (Khan 1990; 1992), is provided by גְּזוּיַן תּוֹרָה בְּכֵט עֵרָבִי ‘two *juz*’ of the Torah, in Arabic script’ (T-S AS 213.10, recto, col. 2, ln. 16). Further specifications of script types exist.³¹

4.7. Text Layout

The book lists contain little detail on text layout, except for the number of columns in biblical codices, e.g., מִצְחָף תּוֹרָה בְּדִפְתִּין ‘a codex containing the Torah, with two columns, from the Palestinian synagogue; a codex containing the Torah, with three columns’ (Bodl MS Heb f 56.49 [Al-lony 82], recto, ln. 4).

4.8. Rubrication and Decoration

Information on rubrication is likewise scarce. One list, however, specifies בִּקְר וְצִהָרִים וְרַחֲמִים אוֹאִיל אֶלְכֵּלָאֻם מְגוּזָף בְּאַחֲמֵר ‘(a book) containing the morning and noon service (of Yom Kippur), and the

³¹ See Olszowy-Schlanger’s contribution in this volume.

God Full of Mercy prayer, in which the *lemmata* are indicated in red' (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13.], fol. 6r, lns 14–15).

The copy described as כתאב פיה אלחמש קראן פי רק מזהב 'a book, containing the five books of the Pentateuch, the Bible (*qur'ān*),³² on gilded parchment' (T-S AS 213.10, recto, col. 1, lns 6–7) may have exhibited some form of decoration or illumination using gold.

4.9. Binding

Information on binding is frequently supplied in the book lists. In most cases this is done by adding the specification *mujallad* 'bound' to an item, e.g., הלכות ראו מגלד '*Hilkhot Re'u*, bound' (T-S K6.45 [Allony 1], fol. 1v, ln. 6). Smaller textual units which might be expected to be left unbound, but do exhibit a binding are specified as such; e.g., ושרח איוב מגלד מפרד 'a commentary on the book of Job, separately bound' (T-S NS 312.84 [Allony 5],

³² That the term *qur'ān* is used to refer to the Hebrew Bible is not uncommon. It occurs also in other book lists, e.g., מצחפין תרגום וקראן עראקי, 'two codices, one containing the Targum and the other the Bible (*qur'ān*) with Babylonian vocalisation' (T-S 20.47 [Allony 80], recto, ln. 16). In Judaeo-Arabic exegesis, the term *qur'ān* is used to denote either *al-qirā'a* 'reading, recitation', as in *al-qur'ān al-ṭabarānī*, or *al-miqrā'* (referenced in Blau 2006, 537). According to sources such as Abū al-Faraj Hārūn's *Hidāyat al-Qāri'*, NLR Yevr.-Arab. I 2390, fol. 5a; and Khan (2020, 31, ln. 55), *qur'ān* refers to all books of the Hebrew Bible except the Torah, namely Prophets and Writings. On this issue, see also Schwarb (f.c. fn. 27).

verso, lns 14–15) or שרר ירמיהו ע"ה תמאם פי מגלד ואחד 'a commentary on the book of Jeremiah, peace be upon him, complete, and in a single binding' (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13], fol. 1v, ln. 15).

Some lists provide further details on the execution and design of the binding. The material, whether leather (Ar. *jild*), parchment (Ar. *raqq*), or cardboard (Ar. *waraq*), is in some cases stated. As to the former, compare, for example, בכורות בערבין 'Bekhorot, Arakhin, and Zevahim, bound in parchment' (ENA 2687.6 [Allony 44], fol. 1v, ln. 7) or, in even more detail, [...] [ה] 'a book with a binding' made of parchment, stitched together, with no book cover and it contains [...] (ENA 1290.6 [Allony 2], recto, ln. 5). Cardboard is mentioned in the item כתאב פי מסאיל ופיסקי דינין מגלד 'a book containing responsa and legal decisions, bound with cardboard' (NLR Yevr.-Arab. I 127 [Allony 95], fol. 1r, ln. 10). Bindings in blue, red, white, and black leather are mentioned: e.g., וגזו בגלד אזרק פיה שער 'a *juz*' with a blue leather binding, containing poetry' (ENA 2687.2 [Allony 28], verso, ln. 1); ושרר 'and a commentary on the first Psalms by our Rav Hiyya, may his memory be a blessing, [with an explanation of] their meaning, bound in red leather' (T-S NS 312.84 [Allony 5], verso, lns 9–10); אלמפתח לר' 'The Book of the Key [to Unlocking the Talmud] by Nissim [b. Jacob], with a white binding' (T-S 16.19 [Allony 6], recto, left, col. 1, fols 6–7), and ספר האגרון אסוד 'Sefer ha-Egron, with a black binding' (same list, recto, left, col. 1, fols 29–30).

If the binding is torn or defective, the book lists specify this, e.g., נביאים מגלד מקטוע אלגלד 'Prophets, bound with a torn leather

binding' (T-S K6.45 [Allony 1] fol. 1r, ln. 2). There is, further, evidence of rebinding; consider, e.g., שרר שיר השירים מגלד גדיד, e.g., 'a commentary on the book of Song of Songs, with a new binding, complete' (Harkavy K.5 [Allony 13], recto, ln. 6).

For the absence of binding, several phrases can be used (Gacek 2001, 24–25; 2009, 22–28): *bi-lā mijlad* (מצחף בלא מגלד) 'a codex, without binding, containing the tractate Berakhot' (T-S 10 K 20.9 [Allony 4], fol. 1r, lns 13–14), *bi-ghayr mijlad* (מצחף בלא מגלד בגיר) 'and another copy, without binding' same list, ln. 14); *bi-ghayr tajlīd* (שרר אלמשנה בגיר תגלד) 'a commentary on the Mishna, without binding' T-S Ar. 51.80 [Allony 15], recto, col. 2, lns 15–16), and *ghayr mujallad* (ודפתר לטיף גיר) 'a neat daftar, unbound, containing pieces of liturgy' (T-S K3.45 [Allony 71], verso, lns 4–5).

4.10. Book Cover

Two terms refer to book covers. The first consists in derivations from the word *lawḥ* 'wooden board' (Gacek 2001, 130), as can be seen in מצחף תורה מלוח ומצחפין מלוחה 'a codex of the Torah, with a wooden cover (*mulawwah*) and two further codices with a wooden cover (*mulawwaha*)' (T-S K3.45 [Allony 71], recto, ln. 2). The second, only attested once, is *ghilāf*: רק מכיט בלא גלאף פי[ה] [...] '[a book with a binding] made of parchment, stitched together, with no book cover and it contains [...]' (ENA 1290.6 [Allony 2], recto, ln. 5; see §4.9 on this item). Contrasting, as it does, with *lawḥ*, *ghilāf* seems to indicate a more supple leather wrapper over cardboard as a book cover (Gacek 2001, 107).

5.0. Conclusion

As we have seen, the medieval book lists offer ample information on Jewish book production and trade in the Near East. They complement what we know from the direct sources, i.e., through a codicological description of different book types, be they complete or fragmentary. Book lists belong to the larger category of indirect sources: correspondence that documents the acquisition of books or their availability (or lack thereof), agreements about the hiring of scribes, financial records of religious establishments that record books allocated to synagogues and educational institutions, and notes and registers maintained by book merchants.

Several aspects could not be covered in this short contribution and remain a desideratum for future research. First, how large were the collections of individuals and religious institutions? Second, what books did these collections contain, and what can be deduced from the book lists about works that were considered standard or required reading? Which authors or which disciplines of learning are especially represented? Third, how do Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew medieval book lists compare with those from a variety of other provenances—Coptic, Syriac, and Muslim-Arabic?³³ Lastly, what insights do the lists offer about the *modus operandi* of professional *warrāqūn* or book merchants? How did their economic networks shape their interactions with hired scribes and commissioners?

³³ For Coptic book lists, see Mazy (2019); I thank Frank Feder for this reference. On Syriac book lists, see Kessel (2024). Muslim book lists have been studied in particular by Hirschler (2020; 2016) and Hirschler and Aljoumani (2023).

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AN EXPLORATION OF GENIZA TARGUM FRAGMENTS AS OBJECTS OF PERSONAL STUDY AND EVERYDAY USE*

Estara Arrant

1.0. Introduction

Today we know, thanks to the preservation of manuscript evidence in the Cairo Geniza, that the medieval Middle East was characterised by widespread general literacy and personal engagement with liturgy and scripture. A focal point of this activity for the Jewish community was the Hebrew Bible, and research has shown the rich, varied culture surrounding its materiality and

* I am delighted to present this study; inspired by my doctoral thesis; and supported by my first postdoc; in honour of my former PhD supervisor Geoffrey Khan; whose constant encouragement enabled me to pursue the study of everyday Bibles in the Geniza; and whose mentorship has assisted me integrally in beginning a scholarly career. This research was conducted under the auspices of the TEXTEVOLVE project; which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme (grant agreement No. 818702). I also wish to thank my colleagues Shlomi Efrati; Jeroen Verijssen; and Ben Outhwaite for their helpful comments. Many thanks to the Syndics of Cambridge University Library for permission to use the images of MSS in this article.

textuality in everyday contexts.¹ Because the text of the Bible was read and studied by all strata of Jewish society, communities had a tradition of translating the Bible into the vernacular and reciting it both in private and public ritual contexts. This tradition stretched back to a few centuries before the Late Antique period, with the appearance of early Targumic texts, and continued into the Medieval period with the composition of various Arabic translations of the Bible (the most famous being that of Saʿadya Gaon). The personal study of the biblical text in vernacular translation is a fundamental aspect of Jewish literacy even today, but the text of the Targum was fossilised into ritual Jewish tradition (to varying degrees in different communities), being read and incorporated into both liturgy and personal study long after Aramaic had ceased to be a widespread vernacular language.²

Given their nature as ‘popular’ texts, evidence of the Targums’ use in everyday contexts is, and should be, coveted by scholars seeking to understand their history and development. Thanks to the Geniza’s unique preservation, we have access to some Targum fragments whose codicological, paratextual, and textual features indicate that they may have been produced for personal study or preparation for ritual reading in the synagogue. If so, they have inherent value as a window into the history and role of the Targum in everyday Jewish life, and with the ongoing

¹ See Arrant (2021); Outhwaite (2020); and Goitein’s (1962) study of education in the Genizah.

² For a comprehensive introduction to Targumic studies see Flesher and Chilton (2011).

development of Targumic textual criticism, may also hold insights in that vein. Even so, fragments with these features, which I describe below, remain generally understudied. This paper will describe some of these codicological, paratextual, and textual features in a small case-study corpus of fragments, and will briefly explore the significance of such features for our understanding of the role of Targum in everyday Jewish life in the medieval Middle East.

The corpus of 23 fragments³ was sourced from the Taylor-Schechter Cairo Genizah collections and catalogued by Klein (1992). I selected these fragments on the basis of the following criteria: they are written on unruled and often reused paper, frequently with uncaredful scripts that are often unformatted, inconsistently arranged, or chaotically jotted down almost as notes written with little artifice. Such specimens stand out as almost ugly amidst the many beautifully produced parchment Targums penned in a careful, calligraphic script with fine pointing and exacting formats. Aspects of their paratextual and textual features also seem to point towards a less formal context. Klein himself would occasionally describe (or query) such scripts as being ‘untrained’. Though not a statistically representative sample (and

³ The full list of shelfmarks: T-S B 1.6; T-S B 1.10; T-S B 5.9; T-S B 9.9; T-S B 11.10; T-S B 11.37; T-S B 11.83; T-S B 11.102; T-S B 12.16; T-S B 12.34; T-S H 3.111; T-S K 26.24; T-S 6H5.1; T-S Ar.8.32; T-S Ar.21.8; T-S Ar.30.293; T-S Ar. 41.100; T-S Ar.48.104; T-S NS 33.117; T-S NS 152.239; T-S NS 154.87; T-S NS 161.57; T-S NS 193.23. I do not discuss in any depth the details of each fragment, but instead cover the highlights of their most noteworthy features.

certainly they span geographic regions and perhaps centuries), they are unified by their distinctly informal characteristics, and, as we shall see below, their purpose as practical instruments of study and liturgical engagement.

This essay shall proceed to describe first their codicological and palaeographic features, then explore the paratextual clues on the basis of which one can infer a practical liturgical context of use, including the edition of a short, personalised *reshut*, which is a liturgical poem composed by (in this case) a named author in preparation for reading the Targum in a public synagogue service. Klein noted the existence of this manuscript but did not have the opportunity to publish it. Finally, I present samples of the Targumic text of three fragments which are annotated with comments and which have noteworthy textual variants. These texts show the inherent relevance of everyday copies of the Targum to the wider stream of centuries-long Targumic textual tradition.

2.0. Convenient Codicology: Physical and Palaeographic Characteristics

Within our corpus there appear two dominant trends in codicological format. Either the passages were written as part of a small paper codex, or a discrete Targum passage was written as the secondary text on scraps of (often reused) paper. Palaeographically, their scripts frequently have irregular features, inconsistency of letter forms, or a mix of registers and skill levels.

2.1. Formats: Codices and Scraps

2.1.1. Inexpensive Paper Codices

A number of the fragments surveyed had the same features as inexpensive paper Bible codices (the most common kind of Bible codices in the Geniza) (Arrant 2021, 289).⁴ They are of a small-medium size, ranging between 9–21.7cm long and 7–18cm wide for a single unconjoined leaf. The average size was 16.1cm x 11.9cm. The statistical majority of leaves ranged between 15.3–17.6 cm long and 10.2cm–13.3cm wide (quartile values). They had a range of 8–17 lines, with an average of 12.7 lines per leaf and a statistical majority ranging between 11–15 lines (quartile values). They are for the most part unruled and unpricked, and have a medium-large size of script (by subjective assessment). They are either interlinear (bilingual: alternating Hebrew and Aramaic) or are of Aramaic text, often with Hebrew lemmata.⁵

⁴ Furthermore, Arrant (2021, 291–95) review scholarship on the price of paper during the Geniza period and layperson access to writing materials and books. See also Arrant (2021, ch. 4), which discusses in depth 467 fragments of Torah codices on paper from the Geniza.

⁵ One manuscript, T-S Ar. 21.8 was trilingual (Hebrew, Aramaic [Onqelos], and Judaeo-Arabic [Sa'adya Gaon]). This is a common format of Bible found in the Geniza.

Figure 1. T-S NS 161.57. The left side is the Hebrew of Leviticus, the right is Onqelos to Genesis, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



An example of such a codex is T-S NS 161.57 (above). The document is written on unruled paper, and the sewing holes and threads evidence that it was part of a small codex. It is 16.5cm x 12.6cm and has 15–17 lines per leaf. As it contains a continuous passage of Torah in Hebrew, a connected leaf of this codex (T-S NS 161.7) was assessed in Arrant (2021, 108–9) and was placed in a codicological group with fifty other similarly formatted Torah codices. Another example of a similar codex format in our corpus is T-S NS 193.23.

2.1.2. Scraps and Reuse

As an alternative to a codex solely containing scripture, other specimens were discrete passages either written on irregularly

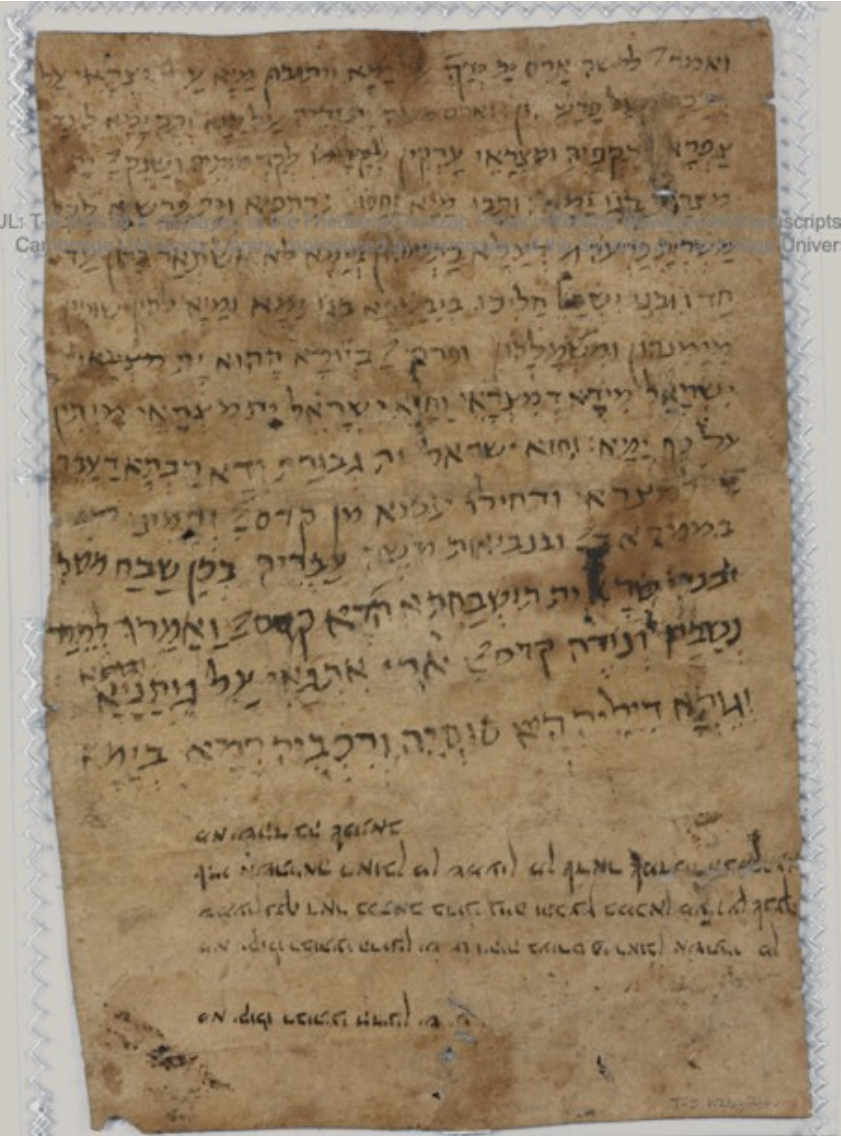
shaped scraps of paper, or on the back of paper which had previously been used for another purpose. The element of reuse occurs frequently in our corpus (ten of the 23 fragments have the Targum written on reused paper). Perhaps the most outstanding is that of T-S Ar. 48.104. The original manuscript was a Judaeo-Arabic commentary on the Ten Commandments, but on the recto of the second folio we have a passage of Targum scrawled atop:

Figure 2. T-S Ar 48.104. Onqelos to Genesis 1.11–12 has been written over a Bible commentary in Judaeo-Arabic, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



Another fragment has a longer, vocalised passage of Onqelos opportunistically written in the large blank margin of a halachic responsum:

Figure 3. T-S K26.24. The Targum Onqelos to Exodus appears at the top, while inverted and below the Targumic text is a Judeo-Arabic halachic responsum, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



2.1.3. Implications of these Codicological Features

The codicological details which characterise our corpus point towards practical contexts of use. The codices are small, portable, and made of paper, which was generally more economically accessible in the Geniza period than parchment.⁶ They are not typically characterised by a regularised attempt at formatting, as they often lack guidelines. Their formatting is close to the most common style of Bible produced both by scribes and laypeople for everyday use. The Targumic passages on reused paper sometimes appear as a unit of text (often discrete sections for a specific *‘aliya* (the calling of a person up for a public reading of the Torah), for example, T-S B12.16, T-S Ar.8.32, T-S NS 33.117 (not on reused paper, but with discrete *haftara* sections), and in every instance of reuse, the Targum is the secondary text casually written atop another text.⁷ Reuse of writing materials is a characteristic of medieval Islamic book culture, and of Geniza material in general.⁸ However, such recycling combined with a hurried script (discussed below) strongly marks these Targums as informal, almost as notes quickly jotted in order to make a record for personal use, rather than to produce a beautiful object. Thanks to the preservation of the Geniza, we can witness this informative practice of convenient codicology.

⁶ See Arrant (2021, 67 ff.) for a discussion of the use of paper in common Bibles and the likely economic cost of such writing materials.

⁷ Another noteworthy reused fragment with Targum is T-S Ar.30.293.

⁸ Such a phenomenon is addressed in Hirschler (2020, 439–74) and Arrant (2021, 298–301).

2.2. Scripts: Mixed Registers and Semi-cursive Sophistication

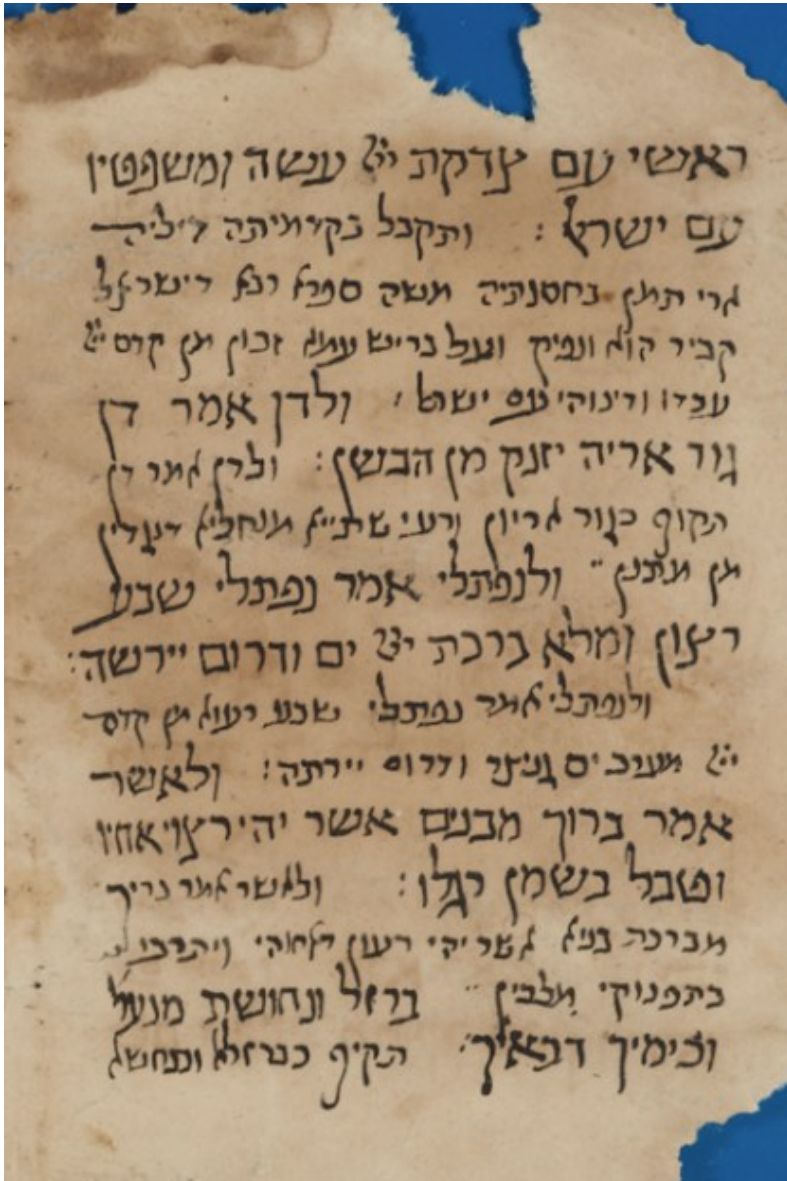
There are two separate trends of script characteristics within our corpus. The first concerns features specific to bilingual Hebrew-Aramaic codices written in two separate scripts, and the second concerns monolingual Targum fragments written in a semi-square script.

2.2.1. Bilingual Bibles with Mixed Script Registers

A common feature of bilingual Bible manuscripts from many regions containing alternating Hebrew and Targum verses is that the Hebrew will often be written in a larger, more calligraphic square script, and the Aramaic in a smaller, often semi-cursive register. What is noteworthy about the fragments surveyed here is not the mix of registers, rather the marked discrepancy in sophistication between the square Hebrew and the semi-cursive Aramaic.⁹ T-S B5.9 (considered in closer detail in §4.0), is a prime example of such mixing of register and writing sophistication.

⁹ Semi-cursive script in the Geniza is distinguished from square script in that it has more connections between letters, and has curved rather than angular connections between two strokes within a letter. There are many degrees of semi-cursive scripts extant; c.f. Beit-Arie and Engel (2002, 1:121–22 ex. 54, 123–24 ex. 55, and, especially, 127–28 ex. 57) for three examples of semi-cursive scripts from Egypt and the Levant in the eleventh century.

Figure 4. The first folio of T-S B5.9, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. The Hebrew is written in the larger square script, and the Aramaic in a smaller semi-cursive hand. These two scripts continue through all of its 7 fragments.



First, this fragment's larger square Hebrew text has definite calligraphic elements that indicate the writer was capable of professional scribal sophistication (most notably in the consistent details of the decorative serifs, 'alef-lamed ligatures, and flourishes, especially for the Tetragrammaton). However, the writing is at times rather clumsy and hurried, blurring the spatial relation of letters to each other within a word (for example, every letter in ln. 9 of Figure 4 is written at its own angle irrespective of the angle of the letters around it), and exhibiting irregularity in letter and word spacing and size. The overall picture portrays a scribe with calligraphic ability writing in a more relaxed manner.

The semi-cursive Aramaic is another matter. The quality is sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing, which is typical of a professional documentary mode. Such writing is naturally quick and practical, and thus has some irregularity, yet the writer is able to include flourishes, ligatures, and decorative elements, such as extended letters and curving ends to *sofit* letters (cf. תקון in Figure 4, ln. 7). Klein noted in his catalogue that this script was 'North-African' in palaeographic quality (though he did not specify the semi-cursive hand).¹⁰

¹⁰ Klein's assessment appears to be in line with comparative scripts. Beit-Arié and Engel (2002, 1 [Oriental scripts]:173–74 ex. 80), which is very similar, especially in the shape of the 'alef. That text, Ms. Heb. d. 46, dates from 1240, according to Beit-Arié and Engel (see also 183–84 ex. 85, ca 1286). Close examples are found in Beit-Arié and Engel (2002, 2 [Sephardic scripts]:173–74 exs 69, ca 1264 from Barcelona, and 73, from Portugal). Given the mixture of Oriental and Sephardi features, 'North African' is not an unrealistic provenance for T-S B5.9.

2.2.2. Semi-cursive Tendencies in Square Script Aramaic

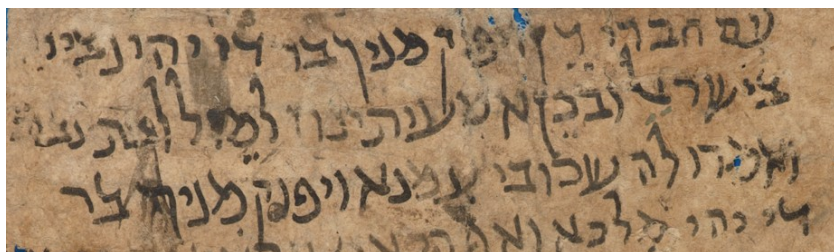
Another noticeable feature of these fragments is that, for monolingual Targums written in a square hand, there often appear distinctive semi-cursive tendencies within the square script. Of particular note regarding this phenomenon is T-S B11.83. This fragment begins its first two lines in a sophisticated calligraphic square script. The third line abruptly shifts mid-verse to a much less careful hand. There are traces of sophisticated semi-cursive elements, however, especially in the shape of the *dalets*, *bets*, *kafs*, *lameds*, and *mems*.

Figure 5. A section of T-S B11.83, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library: notice the abrupt change in hand and sophistication after ln. 2. For semi-cursive elements, see especially the *dalet* and *lamed* of דלך (final line in image), and every *mem*, *kaf*, and *bet*.



Another example is T-S Ar.8.32, a passage of the *tosefta* Targum to Zech. 3.2, 9 and 4.2—which is the *tosefta* for the *haftara* of the Shabbat reading for Hanukkah.¹¹ It is written on the back of a very long scrap of reused paper (24.8cm long), upon which was originally written a much longer letter in Arabic. Klein remarks in his catalogue entry that the script is ‘untrained’, but a closer look reveals otherwise: it is a hurried hand, but one which has distinctively skilled elements. In Figure 6 see, for example, the skilled *alef-lamed* ligature in בִּישְׂרָאֵל (ln. 2), the angled semi-cursive *dalets* and *bets*, the curved and quick *lameds*, and the symmetry in the angles of any left-facing downstrokes (*nun*, *peh*, *ayin*).¹²

Figure 6. Sample of handwriting from the Aramaic side of T-S Ar.8.32, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



¹¹ The Tosefta tradition, when relating to the Targums, are liturgical expansions of the Targumic text, which often include midrashic material.

¹² Cf. Beit-Arie and Engel (2002, 1:121–22 ex. 54), especially the *lamed*, *bet*, *dalet*, *peh*, and *kaf*.

2.2.3. Implications of the Palaeographic Features

Ultimately, these two features—first the mixture of registers with the Aramaic frequently placed into a fluid semi-cursive script, juxtaposed against a less careful square Hebrew text, and the persistence of semi-cursive elements in the hurried square scripts of monolingual Targumic texts—serve to lend an overall ‘informal’ trend to the corpus. The most likely assessment of the evidence is that, at least for our corpus, the writers were trained to a greater or lesser degree in scribal practice, but were writing here in freer modes with less attention to regularity. This suggests a less restrictive environment of use.

3.0. Paratextual Elements: The Liturgical Life of Geniza Targum Fragments

Scholarship on the role of Targum in medieval Jewish communities has posited that during this time the Targumic text lay within the realm of higher Jewish education.¹³ However, the exact extent of the role of Targum in the medieval synagogue of an Arabic-speaking Jewish community is not certain, although Targums were certainly involved in some way. Indeed, many of the Targums described in Klein’s catalogue have paratextual elements, strongly indicating use in a ritual or liturgical context. The present corpus is no exception: it is comprised of liturgically-oriented fragments, and its most noteworthy specimen directly indicates someone’s personal use of the Targum in a Torah service.

¹³ See Goitein (1999, II:chs 5–6) for discussions of education and religious services.

3.1. Targum Copies of *Haftara* and *Maftir* Readings

3.1.1 *Haftarot*¹⁴

A quick glance through Klein's catalogue shows a trend of preserved passages of Targum corresponding neatly to *haftara* passages—a fact which Klein himself frequently points out. While the majority of these *haftara* Targums are written in a sophisticated scribal hand (on paper or parchment), the less formal *haftara* specimens of our corpus seem to indicate that such writing was not restricted to formal scribal contexts. T-S Ar. 8.32 (the handwriting of which we discussed above) is a *haftara* portion (Zechariah 3, the *haftara* read during the Shabbat on Hanukkah), on a long scrap of reused paper. The verso is a long letter in Arabic, and the paper (with the rest of the letter) has been cut shorter to fit the Targum:

¹⁴ The *haftarot* are sections from the Prophets or the Writings which are read after the *parasha* section of the Torah during Shabbat and High Holiday services.

Figure 7. T-S Ar.8.32, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. Written on a narrow scrap of paper, the verso of which is a letter in Arabic which was cut off prematurely.



The physicality of this fragment, with a specific section for synagogue reading on a reused scrap of paper, gives a casual impression of practicality. Even more extreme examples are two *haftara* fragments written in the format of a codex, but with text going in any direction that seemed convenient to the writer: T-S NS 33.117 and T-S 154.87:

Figure 8. T-S NS33.117, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. *Haftara* sections for *parashot Huqqat, Balaq, and Pinhas*. This fragment is connected to T-S NS 33.141. Note the sideways writing in the middle margin of the codex, and the semi-cursive elements present especially in *lameds, bets, kafs, dalets, and peh softs*.



T-S NS33.117 is displayed at the Friedberg Genzakh Project Website (www.jewishmanuscripts.org) as FGP No. 117. The University Library, with the permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. Copy

Figure 9. T-S NS 154.87, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. *Haftara* sections from Jonah, Ezekiel, and Joshua. Note, again, the casual formatting style, multi-directional writing, and hurried script, with a mixture of square and fluid semi-cursive elements.



3.1.2. *Maftir* Translations

Another trend in our corpus is that the manuscripts often contain the few verses which are repeated at the end of the weekly reading as the seventh *aliya*, which is known as the *maftir* portion. Because of their brevity, they often fit on a single page. The *maftir* passage is connected to the *haftara*: the person called up to read the *maftir* then goes on to read the *haftara*. T-S B5.9, which we will examine in more depth below, is such a *maftir* passage for

the festival Torah readings of Rosh Hashanah. Additionally, we have the exact same *maftir* covered by T-S B12.16:

Figure 10. T-S B12.16, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. A quick hand of the of the *maftir* for Rosh Hashanah written on a reused scrap of paper.



While this text lacks formatting and is written in its entirety on the back of a marriage document, it has full vocalisation and is written legibly in a large script. The square elements of the script are clumsy, but it has sophisticated semi-cursive features, especially apparent in the *nun sofit*, *lamed*, *taw*, *mem*, and *shin*. Such features suggest an educated person writing the passage, possibly in preparation for reading themselves or following along with the reader during the synagogue service.

Another interesting example in our corpus is an abridged Targum manuscript of Onqelos to Exodus 18.1–19.4, with only the first few words of every verse extant. It was published by Klein (2011). What is contained is fully vocalised, and although Klein’s catalogue describes the script as ‘untrained’, it appears to have been written by a fundamentally competent writer:¹⁵

Figure 11. T-S B 9.9, an abridged Targum, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library—note the basic square forms of the letters, the repetitive spacing of each letter regardless of the word, and the occasional sophisticated element, especially in the *nun sofit*.



However, the formatting is simplistic and practical; it has what it needs to achieve its purpose, which is, presumably, to create a

¹⁵ In his edition of the text (2011); Klein relies on Beit-Arie’s assessment as fourteenth–fifteenth c. Oriental square script.

reference text within the lines of what is known as a *serugin* manuscript.¹⁶

3.1.3. Behind the Liturgical Scenes

The paratextual features discussed above display a pattern suggesting that these fragments were the source material by which the liturgical performance and study of Targum was supported. These fragments have no pretence: nothing more is included in their features than what is needed to fulfil the purpose of recording the text for its use. They then can be seen to complement the works of art which we see in the more formal Targum specimens of the Geniza: whether reference texts for scribes or synagogue attendees, or study texts written in preparation for oral performance in a service, these rapid scripts penned on small codices and scraps of paper give us a closer view of the workings of the medieval synagogue.

3.2. A Performative Reshut Text¹⁷

In the following section we will look at the Targumic text of T-S H3.111, but there is more to this bifolium than just its Targum. On the lefthand leaf of the verso is an original composition of a *reshut* to the Aramaic text. Klein (1992) remarks in his catalogue

¹⁶ Cf. Phillips (2022), who discusses in comprehensive detail the *serugin*, or shorthand, Bible manuscripts in the Geniza. He also points out *serugin* with a less skilled script (25, T-S AS 59.212) and discusses the relevance of Targumic *serugin* mentioned by Klein.

¹⁷ Many thanks to my colleague Shlomi Efrati for his insights into this *reshut* text.

that T-S H3.111's *reshut* is in Aramaic, but in actuality the majority of the passage is in Hebrew. The preserved text begins in the middle of the *reshut*, and the earlier section has not been found.¹⁸ Given its personalised features and brevity, it is appropriate to publish it here.¹⁹

Lns Text and translation

- (1) וּמְרִשּׁוֹת רַבּוֹתָנּוּ:
...gentlemen. And from the permission
- (2) וּמִכָּאֵל גַּבְרִיאֵל וּמִלְאָכָיו הָאֵל
of God and his angels Gabriel, Michael,
- (3) אֶתְרָגִם וְרַפָּאֵל: חֲנִיאֵל
Haniel, and Rafael. I will translate,
- (4) יֵשׁוּעָה בֶר עֲבֹדבָּאֵל אֲנָא
I, the servant of God Yeshuah son of
- (5) וּמְרִים קֹדֶשׁ דְּבָרֵי אַבְרָהָם:
Avraham. The words of my Holy One and the lifter of
- (6) הַשְּׁלִישִׁי: בְּחוֹדֶשׁ רִאשִׁי
my head.¹ In the third month.²
- (7) רַבּוּתִי
Sirs,
- (8) בְּחֶסֶדְכֶם תִּמְחַלּוּ עַל כְּבוֹדְכֶם
By your grace may you forgo your honour
- (9) וְהִטּוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם: וְשִׁימוּ לִב
and lend your ears. And pay attention

¹⁸ For further literature; see Klein (2011, 167–79), which gives an excellent exposé of *reshuyyot* to the Targums and publishes a number of these from the Geniza collections.

¹⁹ Many thanks to Jeroen Verrijssen for helping to decode some of the difficult handwriting.

- (10) לְעַבְדְּכֶם: הַמְתָּרְגֵּם לִפְנֵי
to your servant. The translator
- (11) לְפָנֵיכֶם הַמְתַּחִּיל וְאוֹמֵר שֶׁ[וּם עֲלֵכֶם]¹
before you who begins and says ...

Notes

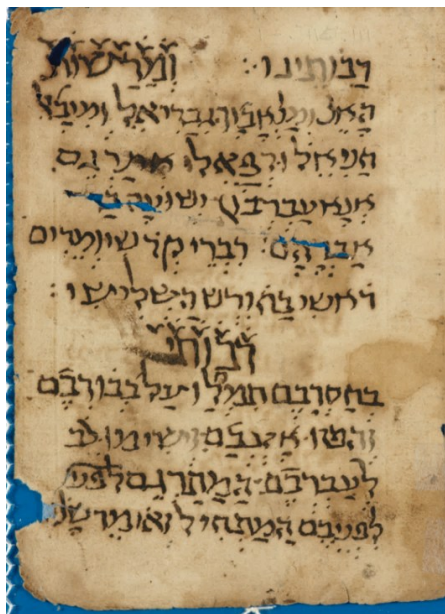
(4) עֶבֶדבֹּאֵל ‘servant of God’ – It appears that he has run these words together. Or he possibly meant עֶבְדְּכֶם ‘your servant’.

(6) רֹאשִׁי ‘my head’ – See Ps. 3.4.

בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי ‘In the third month’ – This gives the first two words of the relevant passage, Exod. 19.1, which corresponds to the beginning of the reading for Shavuot (Exod. 19.1–20:23; Num. 28.26–31).

(11) שֶׁ[וּם עֲלֵכֶם] – Reconstructed as a possibility. Notice the rhyming prose in the lns 8–11 with the masculine plural possessive suffix.

Figure 12. The extant text of the *reshut* in T-S H3.111, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



The performative, rhyming statements of the *reshut* are indicative of an oral liturgical setting, yet the irregular script and homomorphic letters, (*bet* and *kaf* appear almost identical, as well as *dalet* and *resh*: cf. לפניכם / לפניכם, for example, on the final line) indicate that Yeshuah bar Avraham was not writing a carefully commissioned work, although he makes an effort to add in decoration and vocalisation. This personalised *reshut* clearly shows evidence for more pedestrian engagement with the Targum in a liturgical setting.

4.0. A Closer Acquaintance: Three ‘New’ Texts

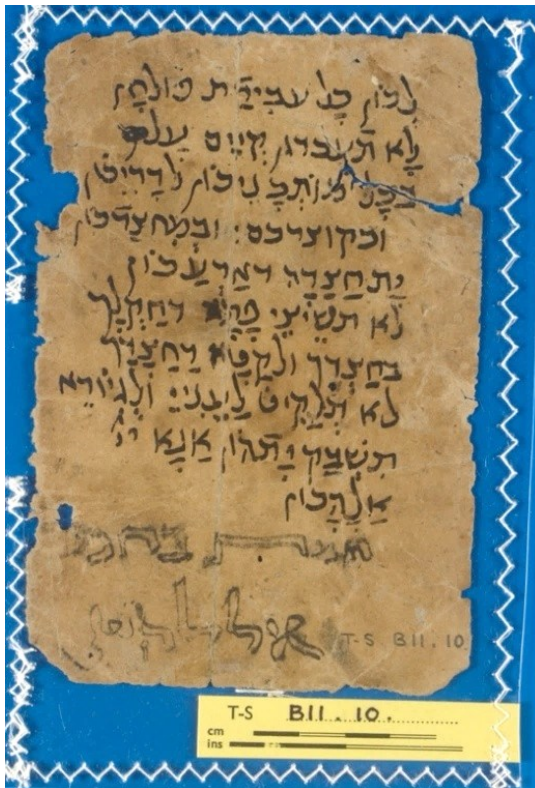
No survey of Geniza fragments is complete without more intimate engagement with the actual fragments themselves. Below I give the general details of three particularly noteworthy fragments from our corpus, and then present a sample of each of their texts, accompanied by notes.

The texts of these fragments are markedly consistent with our modern editions of the Targums, and many of their errors are also seen in more sophisticated Targum manuscripts from other regions. They also contain errors, misspellings, noteworthy vocalisation features, and a few variant readings. Such characteristics are meaningful for our understanding of the evolution of Targumic Aramaic both linguistically and text-critically.

Before we dive deeper into the textual details of our example fragments, we will explore one particularly relevant aspect of a few of these fragments. These manuscripts were written within a Judaeo-Arabic textual and linguistic culture, which did not neglect the opportunity to stamp its influence on our fragments.

This shows up regularly throughout Klein's catalogue (where he mentions Judaeo-Arabic notes and reading instructions in some fragments, for example) as well as in our small corpus. Our most noteworthy example is below, in T-S B 11.10. This fragment is written in an educated semi-cursive hand, with no other script. But at the end of the Targum passage, the following note appears in a poor quality outlined square hand of mixed Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic script: תמת בחמד אללה تعالى 'it has been completed to the praise of God most high'.

Figure 13. The Judaeo-Arabic note in T-S B11.10, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library, appears at the bottom of the recto.

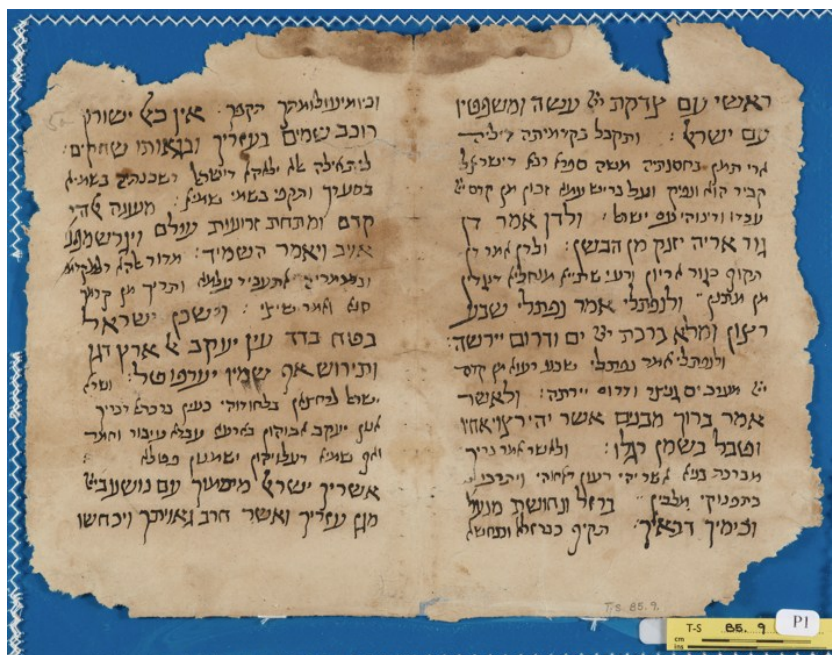


The other most visible example is seen in T-S H3.11 which is discussed at the end of this section.

4.1. T-S B5.9

This manuscript is a bilingual codex containing the Hebrew and Aramaic of Targum Onqelos to Deut. 33.1–34.12 (seven fragments preserved). It is written on unruled and unpricked paper, and a leaf is 21.7cm x 14.5cm. Its script was discussed in §2.0 above.

Figure 14. A full page of T-S B5.9, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



This level of skill in the Aramaic text juxtaposed with the quick and less careful nature of the square Hebrew script, alongside a lack of vocalisation, creates a more casual appearance. However,

the Aramaic text is less careful than its script and has noteworthy linguistic (and possibly semantic) features. I present a sample of the Aramaic below, for Deuteronomy 33.21–25, page 1, recto, fol. 1 (note that the entire document is unvocalised; defective and plene spellings of *yod* and *waw* are not commented upon):

- v. 21 ותקבל בקדמיתה דיליה ארי תמן בחסנתיה משה ספרא רבא דישראל
קביר הוא ונפיק ועל בריש עמא זכון מן קדם ייי עבדו ודינוהי עם ישראל:
v. 22 לדן אמר דן תקוף כגור אריון ורעי שתייא מנחליא דנגדן מן מתנן:
v. 23 ולנפתלי אמר נפתלי שבע רעוא מן קדם ייי מערב ים גניצר ודרום יירתה:
v. 24 מברכת בניא אשר יהי רעון דאחוהי ויתרבי בתפנוקי מלכין:
v. 25 תקיף כברזלא וכנחשא וכיומיעולומתך תקפך

Notes

v. 21

ותקבל – The *alef* in the *itpa*^{al} *binyan* is dropped (Onq. וואתקבל), as well as in the noun בחסנתיה (Onq. באחסנתיה).

בקדמיתה – Occasionally, *'alef* interchanges with *heh* for the definite article.²⁰

ונפיק – Onq. נפק. This *yod* is probably intended as a *mater lectionis*. Compare כגור for Onq. כגר in Deut. 33.22 below.²¹

קדם ייי מן – Onq. קדם ייי.

עבדו – Adds pronominal suffix for Onq. עבד. This may be a mistake or, if read as a noun, it may connect to the following clause ('his deeds and his judgements are with the people Israel').

²⁰ Cf. Fassberg (1990, 64), where he notes that in the Palestinian Geniza Targum material "the scribal practice by which the feminine morpheme is marked by *he*, while other cases of final /a/ are marked by historical *aleph*... no longer obtains."

²¹ The use of *yod* and *waw* as *matres lectionis* in medial positions is common also in Palestinian Geniza Targums (Fassberg 1990, 61–64).

v. 22

תקוף – *Waw* for *yod* (Onq. תקיף).

בגור – Onq. בגר.

ורעי – The *'alef* and *heh* of ארעיה have dropped.²²

מנחליא – Joins two words together (Onq. מן נחליא).

v. 23

שבע – Interchanges *šin* for *samekh* (Onq. סבע).

רעוא – Omits ברכן.

גניצר – Interchanges *šade* for *samekh* (Onq. גניסר).

יירתה – Onq. ודרומוהי יירת. Possibly a Hebraism.

v. 24

רעון – Almost certainly a misspelling (Onq. רעוא).

דאחוהי – Interchanges prepositions to read 'of his brothers' (Onq. לאחוהי 'with his brothers').

ויתרבי – Interchanges *'alef* with *yod* (Onq. ויתרבא).

v. 25

תקיף – The proper spelling of this word here may indicate that the spelling in v. 22 is an error.

עולומתך וכיומך – Runs these words together (Onq. עולומתך וכיומך).

These linguistic features may indicate a lack of careful attention to the content of the Targum and a reliance upon more automatic or familiar spellings, and some features may show parallels to linguistic phenomena in Palestinian Targum fragments from the Geniza. However, such Hebraisms, run-on words, and

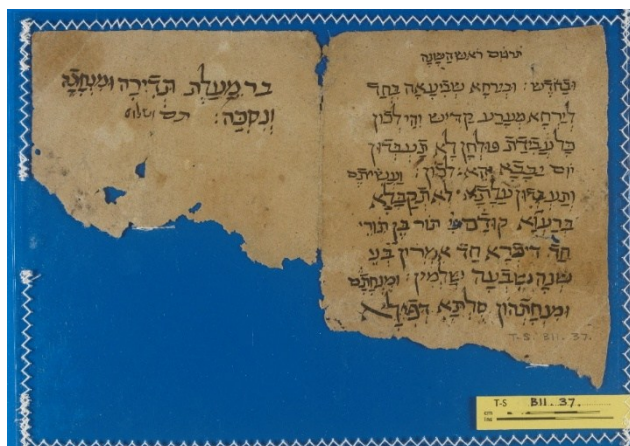
²² Interestingly; a potential parallel can again be seen in Palestinian Targum Geniza fragments; where gutturals are preserved, "although /ʾ/ and /h/ are elided in certain environments" (Fassberg 1990, 26).

occasional orthographical confusions are also seen in professional scribal renditions of Targum manuscripts from other regions.

4.2. T-S B11.37

This fragment is a nice example of a document with a clear liturgical connection, written in a casual manner by a competent, educated individual. It is a bifolium which is written on one side only, with Tiberian pointing. Folio 1 contains Onqelos to Numbers 29.1–3, which is the first half of the *maftir* portion for Rosh Hashanah, with Hebrew lemmata at the beginning of each verse. Indeed, the partly vocalised heading at the top of the fragment, which states תרגום ראש השנה ‘Targum for Rosh Hashanah’, announces its contents. At the end of folio 2, we have the statement תם ושלום. According to Klein, this evidence suggests the fragment was the beginning of a *maftir* collection, perhaps for the High Holidays, and there is no evidence to the contrary.

Figure 15. The leaf of T-S B11.37, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.



v. 1 וּבִירְחָא שְׁבִיעָאָה בְּחֵד לִירְחָא מְעָרַע קַדִּישׁ יְהִי לְכוֹן כָּל עֲבִידֵת פּוֹלְחֵן לֹא
תַּעֲבֹדוּן יוֹם יִבְכָּא יְהִי לְכוֹן:
v. 2 וְתַעֲבֹדוּן עֲלֵתָא לֹא תִקְבְּלֹא בְרַעְוָא קוּדְם יִי תוֹר בֶּן תוֹרִי חֵד דִּיכְרָא חֵד
אֲמַרְיוֹן בְּנֵי שָׁנָה שְׁבַעָה שְׁלָמִין:
v. 3 וּמִנְחָתְהוֹן סִלְתָּא דְפִילָא
v. 38 בַר מַעֲלַת תִּדְרִיָּה וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּה:

Notes

v. 1

מְעָרַע – Extended *dagesh* to word-/syllable-initial *mem*.²³קָל – *Qameṣ* for *ḥolam* interchange.

v. 2

קוֹדֶם – *Shureq* for *qameṣ haṭuf* interchange (expected vocalisation in Onq. קוֹדֶם).

בֶּן – Hebraism (Onq. בר).

דִּיבְרָא – the MS form is closer to forms found in Babylonian and Biblical Aramaic (cf. Onq. דְּבַר).²⁴

שְׁבָעִין – An apparent Hebraism (Onq. שְׁבָעִין).

v. 38 (see Klein 1992)

מְעָלָה – The *mem* has a *ṣere* placed beside the *pataḥ* in the MS.הַדְּיָרָה – *Heh* for definite article *ʾalef* (see above, fn. 20).

The noteworthy features of this manuscript are minor, with some phonological oddities but no major textual variants. It is significant that *rafe* is clearly and consistently written on *begad-kefat* consonants. Ultimately, the content, paratextual elements, physicality, and careful textual nature of the fragment suggest that it was produced by an educated scribe, perhaps as a personal text to aid in preparation for reading the *maftir* section in Aramaic aloud in a synagogue service.

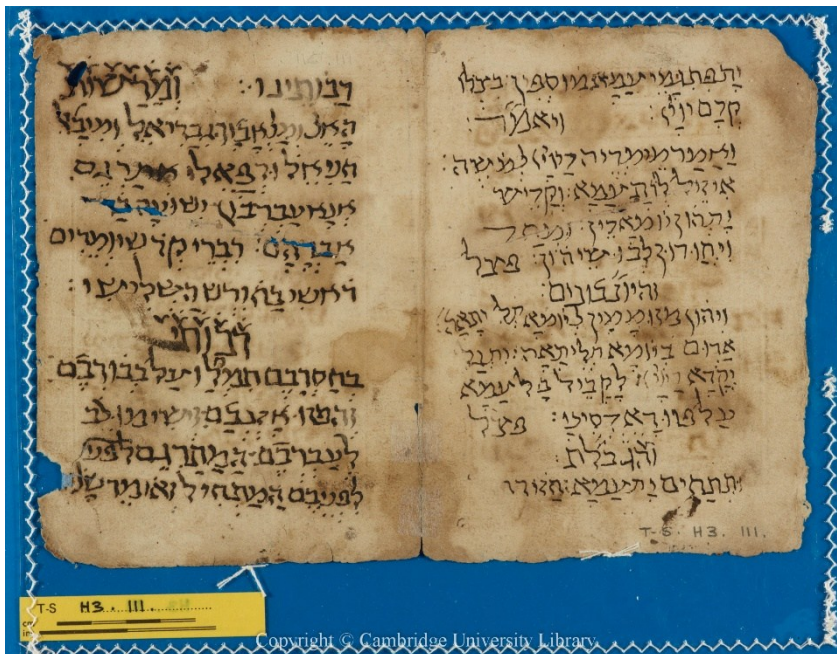
²³ Extended *dagesh* is a phenomenon in Tiberian Geniza biblical material where a *dagesh* is placed often on bilabial or sonorant consonants to distinguish syllable onsets; see Arrant (2022).

²⁴ See the entry in the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* for the root דבר: BT BQ 118b(3): דיכרא; Ezra 6.9: וְדִכְרִין.

4.3. T-S H3.111

This fragment contains the Palestinian Targum to Exodus 19.1–3 and 8–12, as well as a Hebrew *reshut* to the passage of Targum presented above. Its Aramaic text is notably non-standard, so that Klein (1992) describes it as containing “scribal errors and conflated versions.” Similar to the other fragments surveyed, it is a small codex (15.5cm x 11.2cm) with poor formatting (irregular number of lines, exaggerated spacing around the Hebrew lemmata, no ruling or attempt at a straight line, and no consistency of letter size or spacing). The palaeographic features are also consistent with the other MSS surveyed in this study in that some of the letters contain calligraphic elements, but the overall quality of the writing is markedly low, and a mixture of thick and thin pens were used. The second leaf on the verso has the greatest sophistication because the writer switched his pen and managed to accomplish more complicated strokes, some of which show semi-cursive tendencies, indicating that he was indeed a capable scribe. The text itself is a mixture of different Targumic traditions (mainly Targum Neofiti with some wordings from the Fragment Targums, with multiple textual variants). It also has an inexplicable usage of the *sof pasuq* sign.

Figure 16. The full page of the verso of T-S H3.111, courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library. Both sides are by the same hand with different pens. Note the allographic 'alef, the similarities in the lamed, zayin, gimel, and peh across pages for evidence that this is all one hand.



- v. 9 ית פתגמי עמא מוספין: בצלו קדם יי:
 ‘(Moses brought) the additional words of the people in prayer before the Lord.’
- v. 10 ואמר מימריה דיי למשה: איזיל לות עמא: וקדיש יתהון יומאדין: ומחר
 ויחורון לבושיהון: פצל
 ‘And the Memre of God said to Moses, ‘go to the people and sanctify them this day and tomorrow. And let them wash their clothes.’
- v. 11 ויהון מזוממין ליומא תליתאה: ארום ביומא תליתאה: יתגלי יקרא דיי:
 לקביל בל עמא על טורא דסיני: פצל

‘And they will be prepared for the third day [can also be translated as jussive]. Behold, on the third day the glory of the Lord will be revealed before all the people.’

v. 12 וְתַתְּחִים יְתַעֲמָא: חֲזוֹר[חֲזוֹר]

‘And you will limit the people around...’

Notes

v. 9

מוֹסָפִין – This unique reading is probably a form of אוֹסֵף (root יסף).

The wording of the verse (except for the variant) is attested in parts in Neofiti, Onqelos, and Fragment Targum.

v. 10

וְקָדֵשׁ – וְקָדֵשׁ is the imperative form instead of the prefix conjugation וְתִקְדֹּשׁ, which is present in all extant versions. The verb now matches אֵיזִיל ‘go’ in the imperative.

יִמְאָדִין – The scribe has written these two words together (expected: יִמְאָדִין וְדִין)

וְמַחֲרָ – וְמַחֲרָ is a variant to the expected לַמַּחֲרָ in all extant versions.

פַּעַל – This term indicates a break in the reading.

The wording of this verse is closest to Targum Neofiti.

v. 11

מְזוּמָּנִים – Extant versions: מְזוּמָּמִין.

יִקְרָא – Variant reading not present in extant versions (expected איקרא).

בֶּל – Conflation of *bet* and *kaf*: correct reading: בָּל.

פַּעַל – Another strange break in the text with no known correspondence.

The wording of this verse is similar to Neofiti, but even closer to Fragment Targum GTU.

v. 12

[חֲזוֹר] – The repeated word is damaged and only one or two strokes is visible. No spacing appears between the full word and the first stroke of the repeated word.

Of all the fragments presented here, the text of T-S H3.111 is most interesting from a text-critical perspective. Its unique readings, unattested in extant Targum editions, and the conflation of different attested wordings are the essence of Targumic textual criticism. While a text such as this one is not of the level typically included in a critical edition, as the study of Targumic textual history advances and our knowledge of the various streams of Targumic recension grows, brief informal texts such as this one may perhaps become useful in assisting to fill in gaps in our knowledge.

5.0. Conclusions

In this paper I have presented some trends which describe a small corpus of Targum fragments within Cairo Geniza collections whose features seem to suggest a practical context of use, with informal scripts and codicology, and an undeniable connection to synagogue ritual. I have also shown their inherent connections to the more widely studied biblical material codicological culture and Islamic book culture, and pointed out their inherent situation within a Judaeo-Arabic Jewish society.

One of the more interesting findings of this small study is that, although the codicological and paratextual features of these fragments suggest that they were produced for less formal, practical use, many were likely written by educated, competent scribes and writers, and they show inherent ties to a liturgical and ritual context which utilised Aramaic within the synagogue, even in the midst of an Arabic-speaking medieval Jewish society.

The brief samples of their texts show as well that they have inherently interesting features from both a linguistic and text-critical point of view. Despite their lack of a high aesthetic quality, they nevertheless retain their use as important documents which allow us to glimpse the everyday, often messy engagement with the Targumic text in the medieval period.

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TWO JUDAEO-ARABIC LETTERS TO ABRAHAM MAIMONIDES: A RECOMMENDATION AND A CONDEMNATION OF A COMMUNAL LEADER*

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Partisanship empowered the leaders of medieval Egyptian Jewry who oversaw and guided communal life, but was also a source of

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AIU = Alliance israélite universelle, Paris; BL = British Library, London; Bodl. = The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; CUL = Cambridge University Library; ENA = E. N. Adler Collection, Jewish Theological Seminary of America Library, New York; Mosseri = Mosseri Collection at CUL; T-S = Taylor-Schechter Collection, CUL.

endless tension and conflict. On the local level, the appointment of a *muqaddam* ‘appointed leader’ demonstrates this. He was a man of some learning, usually a rabbi, who served as judge and looked after religious functions associated with synagogue life, marriage and divorce, ritual slaughter of animals, etc., and various administrative responsibilities. The head of Egyptian Jewry appointed the *muqaddams*, and members of the community approved their appointment. The office provided the incumbent with rewards, both material and spiritual. (Moses Maimonides and others debated the essence and specifics of these benefits.) Worthies, or those who considered themselves such, often competed for the position.

Abraham Maimonides ascended to the headship of Egyptian Jewry following the death of his father Moses Maimonides in 1204, assumed the title of Nagid in 1213, and held that position until his demise in 1237. Tensions and conflicts associated with the appointment of *muqaddams* appear in his writings and contemporary Geniza documents. Several judges served in Alexandria, and I have discussed elsewhere (Friedman 2017) the sources that describe their rivalry and bickering. As part of a forthcoming publication of the Nagid’s responsa and correspondence preserved in the Geniza, I have identified some ten items from a hypothetical dossier of letters concerning Moses ben Peraḥya and his appointment as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā. Two of these manuscripts are edited below.¹

¹ On the position of *muqaddam*, see Friedman (2005) and the literature cited there (498 fn. 121). Most of the other items in the dossier are

The Nagid was undoubtedly assiduous in appointing well-qualified individuals. In order for his supervision of religious and administrative affairs of the Egyptian Jewish community to function properly, it was only natural that he engage as his local representatives *muqaddams* who were loyal to him. Bonds of loyalty and support often extended to family members and lasted for more than one generation. For example, Abraham ha-Kohen functioned as cantor and ritual slaughterer in Minyat Ziftā and Minyat Ghamr. Data assembled from a number of fragments indicate that he was the nephew of Judah ha-Kohen ben Ṭoviyahu, the *muqaddam* of Bilbays and a close associate of Moses Maimonides and, subsequently, of his son Abraham. The Nagid explained in a letter that he had renewed Abraham ha-Kohen's appointment in "deference to his family" (*ḥurmatan li-baytihi*).²

Moses ben Peraḥya's father, Peraḥya ben Joseph ibn Yijū, was *muqaddam* of al-Maḥalla. Like other members of his family, he had a close association with Moses Maimonides. The patronage bonds between the Maymūnī and Ibn Yijū families, initially based on learning and community service, were strengthened by marriage. Having married sisters, Abraham Maimonides and Moses ben Peraḥya's nephew, Peraḥya ben Nissim, were brothers-

scheduled for publication in my forthcoming study on responsa and letters of Abraham Maimonides from the Geniza.

² For Abraham ha-Kohen's appointment, see Mosseri II.125.1, lns 7–10. For references to Judah ha-Kohen ben Ṭoviyahu and his association with Moses Maimonides, see Friedman (2023, 18 fn. 35). Judah requested assistance for his nephew in a letter to Abraham Maimonides (AIU V.B.49).

in-law.³ Moses ben Peraḥya's incumbency as *muqaddam* was contentious and plagued by rivalries. Abraham Maimonides was inundated (*tarādafat* 'alaynā) (Mosseri II.125.1, ln. 7) with letters of appeal and complaints sent by Moses ben Peraḥya and clearly found patronage of his 'uncle' somewhat of a burden.

The towns Minyat Ziftā and Minyat Ghamr are located on the Damietta arm of the Nile, the former and larger town on the western bank and the latter, smaller one, on the eastern. Moses ben Peraḥya claimed that there had always been one *muqaddam* for both communities. His appointment had been restricted to Minyat Ghamr because of partisanship, since he had at least one rival for the position in Minyat Ziftā, Judah son of *al-ne'emān* 'the trustee', who also contended with him for supervision of the townlet of Ashmūm. Moses included these assertions in a letter he wrote to a certain Solomon ha-Levi, in which he requested the addressee to influence ('remind') Abraham Maimonides to correct the injustice, without letting him know that Moses had asked him to do so.⁴

The fragment of that letter does not preserve the name of the writer, but there is no question that he was Moses ben Peraḥya. Suffice it to say that Abraham Maimonides wrote a letter to members of the Jewish community of Ashmūm and named Moses's rival for the two disputed posts: *al-walad al-'azīz* 'my dear

³ For the contacts between the two families, see Goitein and Friedman (2008, 83–89).

⁴ On Minyat Ziftā and Minyat Ghamr, see especially Ashtor (1967, 32–34); Goitein (1967–1993, 2:44–50). Letter to Solomon ha-Levi: T-S 16.294 ('remind,' etc., lns 18–21).

son' (a term of endearment) Judah ben Ḥalfon *ha-dayyan ha-ne'eman* 'the trusted judge', obviously the same Judah son of *al-ne'eman*. Judah's father was undoubtedly Ḥalfon ben 'Ūlā, *ne'man bet din* 'the court trustee', who had been a close associate of Moses Maimonides. In deciding whether to appoint Moses ben Peraḥya or Judah ben Ḥalfon *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā (and Ashmūm), Abraham Maimonides, consequently, had to take into consideration relationships of patronage with two qualified candidates that had begun with their respective fathers and his.⁵

The Nagid eventually extended Moses's appointment to Minyat Ziftā, and he referred to him as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā and Minyat Ghamr in his autograph letters to him of 1134 and 1137.⁶ The inclusion was not a simple, linear process, and because of the fragmentary data, I am unable to reconstruct the exact time frame. Here I call attention to the confusing data concerning Moses's place of residence. Members of a relatively large community and the Nagid expected its *muqaddam* to reside there. Evidence of Moses ben Peraḥya's presence in one of the two towns, like the documents he wrote and signed in Minyat Ghamr

⁵ A copy of the letter to Ashmūm is in ENA 2875.40 and follows the last lines of another letter, probably concerning the same affair, dated 1224. Being unfamiliar with the letter to Ashmūm, Goitein (1967–93, 2:49) failed to identify the writer of T-S 16.294 and assumed that it referred to a later period. For Ḥalfon ben 'Ūlā, *muqaddam* of Damanhūr, and his association with Moses Maimonides, see Friedman (2005, 520). Ḥalfon *ha-ne'eman* also assisted Moses Maimonides in 1170 in raising funds to ransom captives (T-S NS 309.12, ln. 12).

⁶ Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3, fol. 15, lns 14–15 (1134); T-S 12.597 + T-S AS 145.196 + T-S 10J18.5 + T-S AS 150.105 verso, lns 27–28 (1137).

in 1226 or in Minyat Ziftā in 1232, has been understood to suggest that he lived in the relevant locality at the time.⁷ This is not necessarily the case, however, since, when he functioned as leader of both towns, he travelled back and forth.

At least three letters concern Moses's place of residence. The first of the two documents edited below (lns 7–8), from December 1219–January 1220, mentions his having taken up residence in Minyat Ziftā. The writer of the second document, written in or after 1228, quotes Moses as telling the residents of Minyat Ziftā that he would move there (ln. 28). In his letter of 1237 to Abraham Maimonides, Moses claimed that members of the community of Minyat Ghamr opposed him because he had moved to Minyat Ziftā and lived there, but he did not specify when he made the move. In his reply, the Nagid spoke of Moses as the resident (*sākin*) *muqaddam* of both towns.⁸ Goitein (1967–1993, 2:48–49) assumed that some of these moves reflected a population shift. We now see a connection with Moses ben Peraḥya's initial, limited appointment and his efforts to improve his position.

1.0. A Letter Recommending Moses ben Peraḥya, Minyat Ziftā 1219–1220

Eight men from Minyat Ziftā wrote this petition to Abraham Maimonides to recommend Moses ben Peraḥya, after he had moved

⁷ As Goitein (1967–1993, 2:48–49, 533 fn. 53) concluded, with reference to T-S 13J4.1 (1226). T-S NSJ30 (1232).

⁸ T-S 12.597 and connecting fragments, recto, lns 62–63; verso, lns 27–28.

to that town, obviously to support him as *muqaddam* there. In his letter to Solomon ha-Levi (T-S 16.294, recto, lns 21–22), Moses mentioned that “all” residents of Minyat Ziftā signed a petition (*katabū khuṭūṭahum*) to the Nagid to add that town to Moses’s post as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ghamr. Presumably, he was referring to the petition edited here. In the same letter (margin, ln. 3), he also noted that he had a petition (*khuṭūṭ*)⁹ for his appointment in Malīj. Here the signatories asked Abraham Maimonides to ignore Rabbi Moses’s enemies who maligned him. Elsewhere, Moses mentioned a petition against him,¹⁰ and the letter of complaint against him edited below speaks for itself.

1.1. Text¹¹

CUL Add. 3341. Paper. 17 cm. x 25.7 cm.

(1) [ועז מ]לך משפט אהב (2) [...] יקבלון אלארץ באלמגלס אלסאמי מושב
הדרת יקרת צפירתת [פארת] (3) מרגו ורבנו אדוננו אברהם הרב המובהק אות
הזמן נגיד עם בימיו לא אלמן (4) ירום הודו ונישא עד למעלה
וינהון אן אלדי יעלמוה עלם צחיח וישהדו בה (5) שהאדה חקיקה לא ריב פיהא
מן אמר כבוד גדולת קדושת מרגו ורבנ (6) משה התלמיד המבין החכם והנבון שצ

⁹ Alternatively, ‘letters of appointment’ (Goitein 1967–1993, 2:49).

¹⁰ T-S 12.597 and connecting fragments, recto, lns 44–47; Goitein (1967–1993, 2:44) indeed assumed there was a petition opposing Moses.

¹¹ In the commentary that accompanies the edition of this and the next text, I call attention to departures from classical Arabic, as attested by Lane (1863). If a phrase or usage is listed in a post-classical Arabic dictionary, reference is given to Blau (2006) and Friedman (2016) and, if absent there, to Dozy (1881) or another dictionary. I have not noted most grammatical departures discussed by Blau (1980).

בן הדרת יקרת צפירת תפארת (7) מרנו ורבנו פרחיה הדיין המשכיל זל אן מנד ערפנאה וסכן ענדנא (8) במניה זפתי אלי יומנא הדא לס נעלם לה גרחה ולא שי יקדח פי דינה (9) לא מן קול ולא מן פעל ואנה כתיר אלחשמה בישן עניו קליל אלכלאם מתא (10) מתגאצי ליס לה מערפה באלשר ולא קבל באהלה סאיר אלסיר אלוֹגֶגְבָה (11) אלמתלה מלתזם במא אלזמתה אלשריעה מנתהי ען מא אנהתה ענה (12) אמרא במערוף נאהיא ען מנכר משתגלא באלתורה חסב אלקדרה

(13) ולה אעדא יטלבו אדיתה וירומו תעתירה ויקצדו אכמאלה ולהם (14) מערפה באלשר וקדרה עליה והם פי אוקאת ישנעו עליה תשניעא (15) הו בריא מנה מנה ענה לא ירצאה ולא יסתחסנה פי חק אקל מן (16) יכון מן ישראל פכיף הו ולא יסמע דלך גיר מנהם או מן ילוד בהם (17) ולם נרי פיה קט מיל ולא זלל ולא תחקיק לשי מן מא שנעתה עליה (18) אעדאה בל סאלך פי מא יגב אן תסלכה תלמידי חכמים ושלחי צבור (19) אלי יומנא הדא

ואלדי עלמנאה מנה ותחקקנאה כתבנא בה כטוטנא (20) להיות לו מליץ יושר בין ידין סידנא ויעלם בה חקיקה אמרה ולא (21) ירתאב בתשניע ארבאב אלאגראן ומן יקצד אדיתה ודלך בתאריך (22) אלעשר אלאכיר מן חדש טבת שנת אתקלא לשטרום במניה זפתי (23) רשותיה דאדוננו אברהם יחיד הדור אות הזמן יהי שמו לעולם אמן (24) צדקה בר שלה זלהה שלמה בר בנימין נע (25) שלמה בר יפת הכהן נע יפת בר יאשיה הלוי נע (26) משה בר יהודה כהן שצ משה בר יפת נע (27) חלפון בר עובדיה נע יהודה בר עולה נע

1.2. Translation¹²

(1) *[Mighty K]ing who loves justice.*

(2) *[Your servants] kiss the ground before your lofty eminence, his eminence, his excellency, the esteemed, diadem of g[lory], (3) our*

¹² Hebrew words in the text are printed in italics in the translation.

lord and master, our lord Abraham, the distinguished rabbi, the wonder of our times, Nagid of a people who in his days is not abandoned.

(4) *May his prominence be elevated and raised on high!*

And report that they (we) have flawless knowledge and bear (5) true, indisputable testimony, concerning *that distinguished, great and saintly man, our lord and master*, (6) *the perceptive scholar, wise and discerning Moses—may his Rock guard him!—son of his excellency, the esteemed, diadem of g[lory]*, (7) *our lord and master, Peraḥya, the illustrious judge of blessed memory*. Since we have become acquainted with him and he settled in our place, (8) Minyat Ziftā, we have never known him to have any blameworthy behaviour or blemish on his piety, (9) in neither word nor deed. He is extremely modest, *bashful, humble*, reticent, (10) forbearing, and inexperienced in troublemaking. He has no power over troublemakers, and he conducts himself in praiseworthy and (11) exemplary ways. He adheres to whatever Jewish law requires of him and refrains from anything it prohibits. (12) He enjoins what is good and forbids what is evil. He studies Torah as much as possible.

(13) He has enemies who want to harm him, desire to stymie him, and seek to destroy him. They (14) are experienced in troublemaking and are capable of doing it. Any time they accuse him of something disgraceful, (15) he is innocent of it, removed far from it, neither consents to it nor approves of it, not for the simplest (16) *Jew—a fortiori*, not for himself. No one hears these accusations except from them and from those who rely on their protection. (17) He has never demonstrated an inclination towards, lapse in, or justification of any of the things of which his

enemies (18) malign him. On the contrary, he has behaved in the fashion that behoves *scholars and public servants*, (19) up to and including the present.

We have affixed our signatures to what we know and verify about him (= Moses ben Peraḥya) (20) *as a recommendation for him* to our lord, so that he may know the truth about him and not (21) entertain suspicions (about him) because of the maligning by those who have ulterior motives and seek to harm him.

Dated (22) in the last ten days of the month of Ṭevet, year 1531 of the era of documents, in Minyat Ziftā, (23) *under the jurisdiction of our lord Abraham, the most unique leader of our generation, the wonder of our times. May his fame last forever! Amen.*

(24) *Ṣedāqā bar Shela, may he be remembered for life in the world to come!*

Solomon bar Benjamin, may he rest in Eden!

(25) *Solomon bar Japheth ha-Kohen, may he rest in Eden!*

Japheth bar Josiah ha-Levi, may he rest in Eden!

(26) *Moses bar Judah Kohen, may his Rock preserve him!*

Moses bar Japheth, may he rest in Eden!

(27) *Ḥalfon bar Obadiah, may he rest in Eden!*

Judah bar ʿŪlā, may he rest in Eden!

1.3. Commentary

(1) Ps. 99.4. Biblical verses at the top of letters often foreshadow a message in the body of the text, in this case probably the petition that Abraham Maimonides accept the veracity of the writers' recommendation and not heed critics of Moses ben Peraḥya.

(2) Hebrew מושב, like the preceding Arabic *majlis*, lit. 'seat, audience hall', is used when addressing or referring to a distinguished individual (Friedman 2016, 105).

(4) *yunhūna ʿanna* (Friedman 2016, 499).

(6) תלמיד here and elsewhere is equivalent to חכמים; references in Friedman (2013, 90).

(7) This letter provides the earliest known date on which Peraḥya was no longer alive.

(8) זפתא. Goitein (1962, 115 fn. 136; 1971, 531 fn. 21) explained this common spelling, rather than זפתא, as *imāla*. Cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zefta>.

jarḥa/jurḥa (Blau 2006, 83).

yaqdaḥu fī (Dozy 1881, 2:311).

(9)–(10) Translation follows Goitein (1967–1993, 5:199).

(10) I have not found *mutaghāḏī* in dictionaries.

bi-ahlihi = *bi-ahli ʿl-sharr*.

lā qibala lahu bi- (Sharoni 1987, 994). If my translation ('he has no power over troublemakers') is correct, the expression is inappropriate as a recommendation. Perhaps a mishap has befallen the text. The antithesis, referring to Moses's enemies, seems to be

(*wa-*)*qudra* ‘*alayhi* (lns 13–14), meaning they were capable of troublemaking. We expect here a phrase that indicates that Moses was incapable of wrongdoing or that troublemakers had no power over him.

wājiba ‘praiseworthy’ (Friedman 2016, 169) or ‘obligatory’.

(11) אלתלה = *al-muthlā* feminine of *amthalu* (Dozy 1881, 2:568; Sharoni 1987, 181) with *heh* for *alif maqṣūra* (Blau 1980, 43, 289–90).

al-sharī‘a (Friedman 2016, 908).

(11)–(12) A quote, with minor changes, from Qur’ān 9.112. Similarly, in a letter recommending Moses’s son Joseph as *muqaddam* in Minyat Ziftā after his father’s death (ENA 2558.22, lns 15–16, dated January 1243). In a letter to Abraham Maimonides (T-S 12.597 and connecting fragments, lns 51–52), Moses ben Peraḥya said that whenever he “gave instructions to do good and prohibit wrongdoing” (Qur’ān 3.104 *et passim*, with minor changes) in Minyat Ziftā’s synagogue, a certain congregant behaved impudently.

(12) *mushtaghil bi-* (Blau 2006, 340).

I have not found *ḥasaba* ‘*l-qudra* in dictionaries.

(13) *yaṭlubu adhiyyatahu* (tlb I *fi’l^m*) (Friedman 2016, 327).

yaqṣidū ikmālahu. *Qṣd I fi’l^m* (Friedman 2016, 817). I have not found *kml* IV with this meaning in dictionaries. *Kml* I ‘die’ (Friedman 2016, 371). Perhaps translate here ‘remove him, get rid of him’. Same expression in T-S 16.294 verso, lns 1–2.

(14) *fi awqāt* (Friedman 2016, 228 [*fi waqt*]).

(15) *fī ḥaqq* (Blau 2006, 137; Friedman 2016, 305).

aqallu (Friedman 2016, 805).

fa-kayfa (Blau, 2006, 615; Friedman 2016, 366).

(18) שליוי צבור. Rather than ‘cantors,’ the context here suggests a general meaning like ‘public servants’, identified in dictionaries as a modern usage.

(19) *katabnā khuṭūṭanā* (Friedman 2016, 405).

(20) מליץ יושר. Use of the singular suggests that the writer took this to be a fixed expression or idiom in the sense ‘recommendation’.

(21) *yartābu bi-tashnī*^c. Apparently, an elliptical construction for *yartābu bihi bi-tashnī*^c.

‘arbāb al-‘aghrād (Friedman 2016, 82).

(22) *al-‘ashr al-‘akhīr* ‘December 1219–January 1220’ (Friedman 2016, 682).

(24) Ṣedāqā penned the petition.

2.0. A Letter of Complaint against Moses ben Peraḥya, Minyat Ziftā after 1228

This large fragment of a letter addressed to “our lord Rabbi Abraham,” obviously the Nagid, contains three complaints about al-Sadīd’s misconduct in Minyat Ziftā. Al-Sadīd ‘the sound, the reliable’ is an honorific often bestowed on doctors (Friedman 2007, 367; 2016, 562). The writer’s name is not preserved.

The first complaint concerned the town’s schoolteacher. When he was delayed in Cairo, the children’s parents wanted to

hire a substitute. Al-Sadīd objected, because, according to the writer, he thought the new teacher might stir up trouble for him, and insisted on teaching the children himself. The parents protested that al-Sadīd was too busy with his medical practice, with serving as *muqaddam*, and with other things and did not live in Minyat Ziftā, but he persisted and said that he would move there. After the schoolteacher returned, al-Sadīd said that he would not stop giving lessons, since he had entered into a contract with parents, formalised by an oath in the name of God. The teaching gave al-Sadīd additional income, and the writer attributed his refusal to relinquish the position to avarice.

The other two complaints involve a man called al-Muhadhdhab ‘the upright,’ another honorific often bestowed on doctors (Goitein and Friedman 2008, 85; Friedman 2016, 156). Al-Muhadhdhab and others visited a sick man that al-Sadīd was then treating. When al-Sadīd ignored him, al-Muhadhdhab said that he had already stopped going to the synagogue because of al-Sadīd and asked what else he wanted. Al-Sadīd retorted that he was happy to see that al-Muhadhdhab had found supporters. The writer commented that other people had indeed stopped going to the synagogue—not because they supported al-Muhadhdhab, but rather because al-Sadīd had accused them of opposing him as *muqaddam*.

The third incident concerned al-Muhadhdhab’s treating a certain unwell *Qāḍī*, whose association al-Sadīd had sought, but the story is incomplete.

Since the names of al-Sadīd and al-Muhadhdhab do not appear in the fragment, there is uncertainty in the scholarly literature concerning the dating and background of the letter. Goitein published a translation of the section dealing with the schoolteacher affair and identified the addressee Rabbi Abraham as the Nagid Abraham II, Abraham Maimonides's grandson, active in the early fourteenth century (1962, 113–16 [details in 114 fn. 131]; 1967–1993, 2:49, 560 fn. 24). Elsewhere, he identified him as the Nagid Abraham Maimonides (I) (1967–1993, 1:63).¹³

A number of considerations now make a positive identification with Abraham Maimonides (I) possible. In a different context, I have concluded that the judge Moses ben Peraḥya was a physician, whose honorific was al-Sadīd (Friedman 2007). He is obviously the object of the writer's complaints in the letter edited here. The first two complaints are echoed in other letters from Moses ben Peraḥya's and Abraham Maimonides's correspondence.

The first of Moses's problems as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā described in his fragmentary letter of 1237 to Abraham Maimonides dealt with hiring a schoolteacher there. Moses claimed that he had made a promise that he could not break, but that people accused him of having ulterior motives. In his response, the

¹³ Ashtor (1965, 65) identified him as Abraham Maimonides and noted (Strauss-Ashtor 1970, 146) that Goitein's identification as the Nagid Abraham II was inconclusive.

Nagid told Moses that he had received letters of complaint about the affair.¹⁴

In the second affair described in the letter of complaint, al-Muhadhdhab is quoted as saying that he did not go to the synagogue because of al-Sadīd, but did not explain why. Al-Muhadhdhab of Minyat Ziftā is known from a contemporary letter that also mentions Judge Ḥananel (ben Samuel), Abraham Maimonides's father-in-law (T-S Ar. 54.91). In a letter from 1234, Abraham Maimonides urged Moses ben Peraḥya to uphold his promise to share leading prayers in the synagogue with his cousin al-Muhadhdhab, son of his uncle Samuel, since on Sabbaths and festivals Moses could not be cantor in both Minyat Ghamr and Minyat Ziftā at the same time (Bodl. MS. Heb. a. 3, fol. 15).

Moses ben Peraḥya depicted himself as the victim of unjust opposition and accusations. Nevertheless, it seems that his perennial attempts to extend and strengthen his position as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ghamr and Minyat Ziftā intensified his reluctance to delegate authority.

The writer of the complaint against Moses ben Peraḥya emphasised that his criticism was impartial, but he was probably Moses's rival (whether or not Judah ben Ḥalfon) for the post or a supporter of the rival. His handwriting resembles that of the aforementioned letter of recommendation (ENA 2558.22) for Joseph ben Moses as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā from 1243, after Moses's death! The jottings on the *verso* of the paper that contains

¹⁴ T-S 12.597 and connecting fragments, lns 5–19; margin, lns 1–3; response, verso, lns 16–23.

the complaint against Moses ben Perahya look as if they might be in Moses's handwriting!¹⁵

2.1. Text

T-S 24.38. Paper. 14 cm. x 56.7 cm. The first few lines and the bottom of the letter are missing. The *verso* contains Judaeo-Arabic jottings in another hand, including medical recipes and adages.

(1) [נוטה] קו הפליל / מחלפת ממלכת האלי[ל] / (2) המר[י]מה דגל דת משה / המבארת תלמוד רב (3) רבינא ורב אשי / המחביר המהדיר / יגדיל תורה / (4) ויאדיר / הוא אדונינו / צניף תפארתינו / הודינו והדרנו / (5) נשיא השם בתוכינו / מחמד זמנינו / אברהם הרב (6) המובהק / הפטיש החזק / דגל הרבנים אור עולם (7) ופלאו / ממזרח שמש ועד מבואו / יהי שמו ושם (8) ניניו לעולם יקבל אלארץ וינהי אן אלבאר[י] (9) עאלם אן אלממלוך מן אלמבטהלין אליה בעלו מ (10) מנאר הדא אלבית ומן אלמשפקין אלמחבין לדיה (11) לאנה אנאר מצאביח הדה אלמלה ואטה[ר] נורהא (12) בעד כמודה ולמא כאן הדא יקינא חק עלי אלממלוך (13) אן יכון אדא סמע שי מא פי חק הדא אלבית או ראי אָמור (14) גאריה עלי גיר נטאם טאלע בֵּה אלמגלס ולא יכשי אלממלוך (15) אן ינסב לגרץ פי הדה אלאמור אלא מִתְכַּל פי דלך עלי (16) אלקאעדה אלמסתקרה אן ידין לכף זכות

(17) אלממלוך ינהי אן למא חק עלי אלנאס וזן אלגזיה וכאן אל (18) מעלם אלתי ללצגאר לא ימכנה אן יזן במניה זפתִי לאנה (19) רגל שאמי פדכל אלמעלם אלקאהרה לזין אלגזיה פחצל לה (20) עאקה ואטאל אלמכת באלגיבה פבקו אלצגאר בטאלין פעז עלי (21) אבהאתהם דלך ואגתמעו עלי אן יגיבו מעלם יעלמ[הם] (22) פסמע אלשיך אלסדיד בדלך וכשי אן יגיבו מעלם [יכון] (23) לה תשוּיש מא בסבבה פקאל מן כאן לה צגיר יג[יבה אליי] (24) אעלמה ולא תחתאגו

¹⁵ Dr Amir Ashur has suggested to me both identifications of the handwriting. If confirmed, the circumstances beg explanation, but I prefer not to speculate on this here.

אלי מעלם ואן אלנאס גאובוה באנה (25) מִשְׁתַּגֵּל עַן אַן יעלם באלטב ואלתקדמה
 וגיר דלך מן מתגֵר (26) ומטאלבה בדין וגירה פלם יזל אֵלִי יחולק אלי אן גאבו
 אלצגאר (27) אליה וקאלו לה אנת גיר מקים בהדה אלבלד ולא סאכן בהֲאֵ
 (28) פקאל אנני אָנִי ואסכן תִּדְפִיעַ מא אלי אן תִּם אלגרץ אלדי (29) לה פגא
 אלמעלם מן אלקאהרה פמן אלנאס מן רק עליה (30) לפקרה וודא אליה צגארה
 ומנהם מן כאן אלסדיד קד עאהדה (31) עהד אללה אנה לא יעוד בצגארה לגירה
 פבקי תחת (32) אלעהד למא חֲלִייתִי אלפצה ללסדיד

אלממלוד ינהי (33) אן פי גיבה אלמעלם ותעלים אלסדיד אֲתֶפֶק מריץ באלבלִי [ד]
 (34) פדכלו אלגמאעה ליזורוה וכאן אלשיך אלסדיד חאצרא ענדה (35) פדכל פי
 גמלה אלגמאעה אלשיך אלמהדב פלם יאבה (36) אלסדיד אליה ולם יתחרך לה
 פלמא גלסת אלגמאעה חול (37) אלמריץ פאכד אלשיך אלמהדב אן יקול ללשיך
 אלסדיד (38) הל אנת גצבאן עלי כנֶת תאדבֶת־כמא תאדבו אלגמאעה (39) פלם
 אעלם מא אלדי תרידה מני קד תרכֶת־לך אלכניסה (40) לם אחצרהא אליוס
 פגאובוה אלסדיד אלחמד ללה אלדי (41) וגדתֶת־מן סאעדך וכאן באלחצרה אקואם
 מא ביחצרו (42) אלכניסה ליס הו מן וגה אנהם מסאעדן ללשיך אלמהדב
 (43) בל מן גהה אלסדיד למא סמעו מנה כלאם פי חקהם (44) וגעלהם פי צורה
 נגצאה פי תִקְדַּמְתָּה פתאוה אלשיך (45) אלסדיד וקאל כם אכתם מא אנא פיה
 ולא ינכתם

(46) וכאן קאצי אלחכם מריצא במרץ שדיד ואלמהדב ידברה (47) [ב]עֵל כרחו
 שלא בטובתו פקצד אלסדיד אן יכון בינה (48) [ובין אלקאצי] י צלה וכאן ללקאצי
 כדים בה ירקאן ואלמהדב (49) [...] שֶׁהָאֵדָה פגא אלסדיד ללכדים וטלב
 (50) [...] עֵלִי סביל אלצחאבה פגאב (51) [...] ליסלמה לכדים (52) [...] וקאל
 לה כיר (53) [...] אלקאצי (53) [...]

2.2. Translation

(1) [... who measures] with a line justice. Causes the kingdom of idolatry to disappear. (2) Raises the banner of the religion of Moses. Interprets the Talmud of (3) Ravina and Rav Ashi. Composes and edits. May he magnify (4) and glorify [His] Teaching! He is our lord, diadem of our glory, majesty, and splendour. (5) Elect of God among

us. Delight of our generation. The preeminent (6) rabbi, the mighty mallet, banner of the rabbis, light of the world (7) and its wonder, from the rising to the setting sun. May his name and the name (8) of his sons endure forever!

[Your servant] kisses the earth and states that the Creator (9) knows that your servant is one of those who supplicate Him to make (10) the light of this house shine on high and admires and loves it (or: him). Because it (or: he) (11) has lit the lamps of the Jewish people, and made its light shine (12) after it had become dull. This being the case, it is incumbent upon your servant, (13) when he hears something unfitting the honour of this house or matters (14) being conducted improperly, to bring them to his Excellency's attention. Your servant does not fear (15) that (my reporting) these things will be attributed to an ulterior motive, for he relies (16) on the well-established principle "*Give one the benefit of the doubt.*"

(17) Your servant reports that when people were required to pay the poll tax (18) and the children's schoolteacher was unable to pay in Minyat Ziftā, because he (19) is a *Shāmī*, he travelled to Cairo to make the payment. He was (20) delayed there and absent for a long time, and the children were idle. This distressed (21) their fathers (or: parents), and they decided to bring in a(nother) teacher to teach [the children]. (22) When Shaykh al-Sadīd heard this, he was afraid that they would bring in a teacher (23) who would stir up trouble for him, so he said: "Whoever has a youngster, b[ring him to me]; (24) I will teach him, and you won't need a(nother) teacher." The people responded that he

(25) was unable to teach because he was preoccupied with practicing medicine and serving as *muqaddam*, furthermore with business, (26) debt-claiming and more. Nevertheless, he did not stop arguing until they brought the children (27) to him. They said to him, “You do not live in the town and are not a permanent resident!” (28) To which he replied, “I will move here!” This was to put them off until he accomplished his ulterior motive. (29) When the schoolteacher returned from Cairo, some people had pity on him, (30) because of his poverty, and brought their children to him. With others al-Sadīd had made a contract (31) bound by an oath before God, that they not send their children again to anyone else, and they (or: he) adhered to (32) the contract, because al-Sadīd liked the money.

Your servant (further) reports (33) that in the schoolteacher’s absence and when al-Sadīd was giving lessons, someone in to[wn] happened to be ill. (34) Members of the community went to his home to visit him when Shaykh al-Sadīd was with (treating) him, (35–36) and Shaykh al-Muhadhdhab was among those who came in. Al-Sadīd ignored him and did not turn towards him. When they sat down around (37) the ill man, Shaykh al-Muhadhdhab began speaking and said to Shaykh al-Sadīd: (38) “Are you angry with me? I have accepted your authority like (other) members of the community! (39) I don’t know what you want from me! I left the synagogue for you. (40) I did not go there today!” Al-Sadīd answered him: “Thank God, (41) you found people who support you!” Among those present, there were people who are not going to (42) the synagogue—not because they support Shaykh al-Mu-

hadhdhab, (43) but because of al-Sadīd, since they heard disparaging remarks he had made about them, (44) in which he considered them to be troublemakers for his leadership as *muqaddam*. Then Shaykh al-Sadīd sighed (45) and said, “How much I hide my troubles, but they are not hidden!”

(46) The *Qāḍī* who sits in court was seriously ill, and al-Muhadhdhab was treating him (47–48)—*under compulsion and involuntarily*. Al-Sadīd had wanted to have a relationship with [the *Qāḍī*]. The *Qāḍī* had a slave with jaundice and al-Muhadhdhab (49) [...] testimony (?) al-Sadīd went to the slave and requested (50) [...] in a friendly fashion, and he gave (51) [...] to deliver it to (the) slave (52) [...] and he agreed (53) [...] the *Qāḍī* [...]

2.3. Commentary

(1) See Isa. 44.13. Verbs here and in the continuation are in the feminine form because the subject is שררתו ‘his office’, which appeared in one of the few lines missing at the top.

Isa. 2.18.

(2)–(3) Ravina and Rav Ashi, following רבינא ורב אשי סוף הוראה (b. Bava Meṣi‘a 86a). At the end of ln. 2, the letters רב have an apostrophe over each letter. These are the first letters in ln. 3 and were written as a filler to the margin (as in ln. 9). Goitein (1962, 115) mistakenly copied the name Rav.

המחביר is derived from אֶחָבִירָה (Job 16.4). The phrases here closely follow the opening lines in a question addressed to Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon 1960, 524–25; see Goitein 1962, 115). That responsum has been preserved only in an autograph

Geniza fragment (BL Or. 5519B.1). The formula was presumably known from another source, and *pace* Goitein, I do not assume that the letter writer copied it from the query (even though in both sources, the word can be read as המחביר).

(4) Isa. 43.21.

(5) The writer's substitution of השם 'the Name' for אלהים (Gen. 23.6) is exceptional (for שמויים instead of אלוהים in Italian manuscripts, see Spiegel 2005, 631 fn. 93; Provençal 2022, 140 fn. 19). Its substitution for יי or variants, written instead of the Tetragrammaton, is rare in the Geniza. Goitein's (1962, 115 fn. 133) assumption that it is unique in this letter and probably points to a late date has been superseded by subsequent research. Writing השם accords with a ruling by Abraham Maimonides for reciting inappropriate benedictions and his own practice in letter writing (Abraham Maimuni 1937, 128, 210 [translating the title of his magnum opus, *Kifāyat al-Ābidīn*, לעובדי השם]; T-S 10J30.11, margin; Friedman 2018, 493). *Ha-shem* (השם) appears three times in a Hebrew letter (T-S 13J20.9), probably written by an immigrant to Egypt from Europe (Goitein 1969–93, 3:220). See also T-S 13J22.8 (signed by Peraḥya), ln. 14: תזכו לחיות בנעם אשם. Additional examples appear in Geniza documents. In a Judeo-Arabic context in T-S 12.581, ln. 16: *ḥaqqā l-shēm* חק אלשם 'I swear by *al-shēm*'! (*ḥaqq-* without the prefixes *b-*, *f-*, or *w-* for an oath noted in Blau 2006, 137; Friedman 2016, 303–5).

(7) Ps. 113.3.

(8) נין 'son' (Goitein, 1962, 115; Friedman 1982, 33). Abraham Maimonides's second son, Obadiah, was born in 1228.

‘Kisses the earth before the Nagid’, a common expression of veneration, abbreviated here.

(9) *al-mamlūk* ‘I’ (Friedman 2016, 475).

(10) Presumably, the house of Moses Maimonides; the writer may have been his student.

(11) *al-milla* (Friedman 2016, 479).

(13) *mā fī ḥaqq* (Friedman 2016, 301–2).

(14) *tāla‘a bihi ʿl-majlisa* (Friedman 2016, 333; the preceding letter, ln. 2).

yakhshā... an (Hava 1951, 161).

yunsab li-gharaḍ (Friedman 2016, 522; 82 [!]).

(16) Cf. m. Avot 1.6.

(18) *allatī lil-ṣighār* (Blau 1980, 237, 242).

yumakkinuhu an yazina (Friedman 2016, 472).

(19) *shāmī* ‘native of Eretz Israel-Syria’ (Friedman 2016, 874). A foreigner had to pay the tax in the capital (Goitein 1967–1993, 1:63–64, with reference to this letter).

dakhala (Blau 2006, 206; Friedman 2016, 128).

(21) *ʿabahāt*. Apparently a hypercorrection that simulates *ʿum-mahāt*. Additional examples appear in the Geniza letters.

(22) *shaykh* ‘communal leader, notable, doctor’ (Friedman 2016, 891–92).

yajībū (Blau 2006, 196; Friedman 2016, 100).

(23) *tashwīsh* (Blau 2006, 355).

(24) *jāwabūhu bi-annahu* (Friedman 2016, 91 [*bi-hā*]).

(25) *mushtaghil ‘an an yu‘allim*. I have not seen this construction in dictionaries.

taqdimā (Friedman 2016, 777).

Goitein (1967–1993, 2:258) noted that physicians engaged in business and referred to this letter: “The busybody of Minyat Ziftā, the physician and *muqaddam* whom we have met even as a substitute schoolteacher, definitely was an exceptional case and the times showed signs of decline.” Al-Muhadhdhab (below, lns 35ff.) engaged in business as well (T-S Ar. 54.91, lns 7–8).

(26) debt-claiming. Perhaps al-Sadīd was not the creditor (Goitein 1962, 116), but the debtor.

Goitein (1962, 116) noted that יחולק is apparently a Judaeo-Arabic word, not found elsewhere in the Geniza papers, derived from Hebrew מחלוקת. The word מחלוקת is common in Judaeo-Arabic contexts. Here the phrase *lam yazal* requires a *yaf‘al* form. Perhaps translate: ‘He did not stop arguing that they should bring’, etc.

(27) Goitein (1967–1993, 2:70): “The local people do not want him also as teacher, because they did not regard him as a permanent resident.”

(28) The writer evidently did not believe that al-Sadīd intended to move to Minyat Ziftā. The purported ulterior motive was probably to secure the position as *muqaddam* of Minyat Ziftā. See the discussion above.

(29) *raqqa ‘alayhi* (Dozy 1881, 1:544).

(30) *waddā* (Blau 2006, 757; Friedman 2016, 180).

(32) *ḥuliyat* (so vocalised) *al-fiḍḍa lil-sadīd* (lit. ‘the money was sweet’, etc.). I have not found *ḥuliyā lahu*, etc., in dictionaries; *ḥalā lahu* (Goshen-Gottstein 1972, 441; Wehr 1979, 226); neither have I seen *fiḍḍa* ‘money’ in dictionaries; see Friedman (2016, 710: ‘silver coins’ [some citations there fit the usage here]; 148 [*dhahab*]); see the discussion above on this complaint.

(34) *dakhala* (Friedman, 2016, 128).

(35)–(36) (*lam*) *ya’bah ilayhi* (Blau 2006, 1).

(*lam*) *yataḥarrak lahu*; I have not seen *ḥrq V lahu* in dictionaries; perhaps to be translated: ‘did not react to him’.

’akhadha an yaqūla; I have not seen *’khdh* (I) *an yaf’ala* in dictionaries; *’akhadha yaf’alu* (Lane 1863, 29); *’akhadha yaqūlu* ‘he began to say’ (Hava 1951, 4).

(38) *ta’addabtu* (Friedman 2016, 3).

(39) *lam a’lam*. *Lam yaf’al* for present tense (Friedman 2016, 455).

(39)–(40) For al-Sadīd’s reluctance to share functions in the synagogue with al-Muhadhdhab, see the discussion above.

(41) *’aqwām* (Friedman 2016, 790).

(42) *laysa huwa min wajh*. This *huwa* is pleonastic; see Friedman (2016, 157; there copula or meaning ‘that is’); Blau (2006, 737; *huwa dhālika* ‘that, that one’); I have not seen *min wajh* in dictionaries as used here; cf. *min jiha* in the following line.

(43) *min jiha* (Friedman 2016, 178).

kalām (Friedman 2016, 369–70).

fī ḥaqqihim (Blau 2006, 137).

(44) I have not seen in dictionaries *nughṣāh* (see Lane 1863, 2817) or *nughadāh* (see Biberstein Kazimirski 1860, 2:1301).

(45) *mā anā fīhi* (Friedman 2016, 692–93).

“But they are not hidden” is presumably a quote of what al-Sadīd said, rather than a comment by the writer. Perhaps to be translated: ‘No matter how much I hide my troubles, they are not hidden’.

(46) *qāḍī al-ḥukm*, lit. ‘the *Qāḍī* of judgement’. I have not seen this term in dictionaries. For *qāḍī al-taḥqīq* ‘the investigating *Qāḍī*’, see <https://tinyurl.com/56vub3pm>. *Qāḍīs* served in other special functions, e.g., *qāḍī al-ankiḥa* ‘*qāḍī* for marriages’ (Dozy 1881, 2:363).

yudabbiruhu. I have not seen *ḍbr II -hu* in this sense in dictionaries.

(47) על כרחו שלא בטובתו. The writer used two synonymous Hebrew phrases to emphasise that al-Muhadhdhab did not intend to infringe on al-Sadīd’s territory as a doctor, but was compelled to treat the *Qāḍī*. There were two Jewish doctors in Minyat Ziftā in 1266, one called *al-ḥakīm* and one called *al-ṭabīb* (see T-S 12.543, lns 9, 12; Strauss-Ashtor 1970, 42–44; Goitein 1967–1993, 2:46, 532 fn. 3).

qaṣada an yakūna (Friedman 2016, 817).

(48) *khadīm* (Dozy 1881, 1:355).

yaraqān (Dozy 1881, 2:851).

(50) *‘alā sabīl* (Blau 2016, 306; Friedman 2016, 559).

(51) *liyusallimahu li-khadīm* (Friedman 2016, 580).

(52) *qāla lahu khayr* (Friedman 2016, 408). Al-Sadīd purportedly attempted to gain access to the Qāḍī in a roundabout way, perhaps when al-Muhadhdhab was away giving testimony in some case.

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A FRAGMENT OF THE *MAḤBEROT* *‘AZAR’EL BEN YOSEF*

Michael Rand z"l

In 1965, Schirmann published two Geniza fragments representing, respectively, the beginnings of two separate *maqamas* whose opening formula is דבר עזראל בן יוסף ‘Thus says ‘Azar’el ben Yosef’.¹ He furthermore identified a third, previously-known fragment called the *Maḥberet sheliah ha-ṣibbur* ‘The *maqama* of the precentor’ as belonging to the same group, since it also contains the formula in question.² To date, these three fragments are all that may be attributed with certainty to the *Maḥberot ‘Azar’el ben Yosef*. The *Maḥberet sheliah ha-ṣibbur* has been re-edited by Huss (2002, 242–44) within the context of an extensive study of homoerotic themes in Medieval Hebrew literature, and I have re-edited the first of Schirmann’s fragments (Rand 2021, 63), mostly with

¹ See Schirmann (1965, 392–96). Schirmann incorrectly gives the name as עזריאל, and this minor error has resulted in the *maqamas* being referred to in the literature as the *Maḥberot ‘Azri’el ben Yosef* (cf. Rand 2021, 62 fn. 46).

² The beginning and end of *Maḥberet sheliah ha-ṣibbur* are missing, and in this case the formula appears in the body of the *maqama*. The formula is discussed by Huss (2002, 200–2).

a view to its being based directly on the opening of *maqama* 9 from the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī.³

Very little may be said with certainty of the *Maḥberot* ‘Azar’el ben Yosef as a collection (cf. Rand 2021, 65 fn. 51), which scholarly consensus places in the (late) 13th century (Huss 2002, 200). One factor, however, is immediately apparent: in one way or another, all the fragments revolve around homoerotic themes.⁴ This matter has been dealt with *in extenso* by Huss (see above) and I do not re-examine it here, limiting myself merely to noting a fact that is relevant to the discussion below, namely that—as opposed to the idealised longing for a stereotyped beautiful youth of the sort that is described in the poetry of the Hebrew Golden age—the story of the infatuation of the precentor with a young man as told in the *Maḥberot* ‘Azar’el ben Yosef has a decidedly down-to-earth, even seedy, flavour to it. A hint of such seediness is present also in Schirmann’s second fragment, which is re-edited below. With regard to our author’s readiness to take up non-normative social phenomena in ways that are very rarely attested in Medieval Hebrew *belles-lettres*, I believe that Schirmann’s interpretation of the fragment leaves some room for improvement, and this is the pretext for my re-editing it here. Subsequently, I will also edit a second, new fragment that in my view, quite likely, though by no means certainly, contains a continuation of

³ Schirmann (1965, 393) suggests that this fragment is, in fact, the beginning of the *Maḥberet sheliah ha-šibbur*, but I agree with Huss (2002, 199–200) that this is unlikely.

⁴ For Arabic prosimetric homoerotic literature in the Mamlūk period, see Rowson (1997).

the *maqama* whose beginning is preserved in the fragment re-edited below. For ease of reference, the re-edited fragment will henceforth be referred to as F1, and the new fragment as F2.

1.0. Contents of Fragment 1

After the introductory formula, F1 opens with the narrator's indicating that, being in search of a good time (ln. 2), he found himself in *Miṣrayim* (see below) in the company of folk from Alexandria and Damietta (lns 3–4). This merry band loved to drink and carouse with the locals, who are termed *bene ha-neḳar* 'foreigners' (ln. 5; cf. also lns 13 and 29). We are told, moreover, that these foreigners are called *hadassim* 'myrtles' (see below), in honour of their *sar* 'prince' (ln. 6). The most likely interpretation of this somewhat enigmatic exposition seems to be the following. If we assume *Miṣrayim*, in which the narrator along with his Alexandrian and Damiettan companions find themselves, to be Egypt, it is difficult to see how from their point of view their local hosts, the *hadassim*, can be referred to as foreigners. However, in Medieval Hebrew parlance, *Miṣrayim* can also refer specifically to Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ (cf. Golb 1974, 128) and this is the meaning that the narrator seems to have had in mind.⁵ If this interpretation is

⁵ This usage is found in *maqama* 39 [= 46] of al-Ḥarizi's *Taḥkemoni*. In the following, the hero describes his passage from Alexandria: רַבְּבָתִּי אָנִיָּה ... וְעַבְרָתִי בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם וְהֵם שְׁתֵּי מְדִינֹת רַבְּבָתִּי 'I boarded a boat ... and passed to the Land of *Miṣrayim* (Exod. 12.12), which consists of two cities [i.e., Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ]' (39.37–39; al-Ḥarizi 2010, 434; the text of Recension 2 [ln. 59; p. 451] is nearly identical at this point). And thus also in al-Ḥarizi's freestanding *maqama* known as *Maḥberet ha-nedivim*: וּבְאֵתִי בְּאֵנִיּוֹת שִׁיחוֹר ... עַד קְרָצָה לָנוּ מִצְרַיִם בְּעִינֵיהָ ... וְהִיא נְחָלֶקֶת לְשְׁתֵּי מְדִינֹת / הָרָאשׁוֹנָה

correct, the narrator and his companions are in a foreign place, in the sense that they are all recent arrivals in Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ.

The company's stated objective is carousal, and for this purpose they seek out the haunts of the local *hadassim* (ln. 7). The revelry is centred around wine drinking (lns 5 and 7–8), accompanied by music and dancing (lns 9–10). There is an unambiguous reference to sexual license (ln. 6). Also, there is a hint that another substance is consumed along with wine: *zer'onim* (ln. 8), a biblical *hapax legomenon* that in its original context (Dan. 1.16) approximately means 'greens (i.e., vegetable matter)' or '(edible) seeds'. However, given the decidedly demimonde atmosphere of the entertainment, it is very likely that the word is used here as an epithet for hashish. Wine and hashish are frequently mentioned together in Arabic sources.⁶ With reference to the *maqama*, see, for example, the description of a carousal in *al-Maqāma al-Hitīya al-Širāzīya* by al-Šābb al-Ẓarīf al-Tilimsānī (1262–1289): 'فلفنا جنح ليلة نضرة / على شراب وخضرة: And the darkness

מִצְרַיִם הַנְּסוּכָה / וְהַשְּׁנִית עִיר הַמְּלוּכָה 'And I boarded Nile boats... until the eyes of *Miṣrayim* winked at us... Now it is divided into two cities: / the first is the princely *Miṣrayim* [i.e., Fuṣṭāṭ] / and the other is the royal metropolis [i.e., Cairo]' (lns 53–54, 56, 65–66; Yahalom and Blau 2002, 79–80).

⁶ See Rosenthal's study *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Muslim Society*, reprinted in Rosenthal (2015, 131–334). An Arabic *zajal* by the Egyptian Jewish poet Nāṣir (ca 1300) in which wine is compared favourably to hashish has recently been identified by Alan Elbaum in the Geniza, in ms. Vienna, National Library of Austria PER H 134. The poem, פִּי דְלֹחֵשִׁישׁ אֶסְלֹב, has not yet been published, but a preliminary report and an English translation may be found in Elbaum (2021).

of a verdant night enclosed us, / [as we partook] of wine and hashish (lit. greenery)’ (Pomerantz 2021, 8).⁷ The word *zer‘onim* as an epithet term for hashish is likely a nonce-usage, and in any case I am not aware of anything like a (literary) Hebrew hashish-vocabulary of the sort that existed in Arabic.⁸ If my interpretation is correct, in the present case we have before us a literary Hebrew manifestation of a marginal social reality that is well attested in Medieval Arabic literature.

The use of *zer‘onim* as a pseudo-cant term may point in the direction of the interpretation of the mysterious *hadassim*, which also gives the impression of being an attempt at rendering a slang register. Their being licentious revellers under the leadership of a *sar* ‘shaykh’ naturally puts one in mind of some sort of vaguely underworld association.⁹ It is unclear whether the reference to a shaykh is to be understood literally or metaphorically, i.e., as the object of the main interest of the *hadassim*. If the latter, it may just be that *hadas* ‘myrtle’ also hints at hashish. This suggestion relies on a poem addressed to al-Šābb al-Ẓarīf by a friend who wished to overcome his reluctance to use hashish at a party: *idhā furaṣun badat laka fa-ntahizhā / fa-a‘māru s-surūri bihā qīṣāru // wa-khudhā min mu‘anbaratin bi-lawnin / ka-lawni l-āsi yalḥaquhā khḍirāru* ‘When opportunities present themselves to you, seize

⁷ For ‘green(ery)’ as a term for hashish, see Rosenthal (2015, 156).

⁸ For a typological parallel, one may point to *bizr* ‘seed’, cited by Rosenthal (2015, 173) from an Arabic list of slang terms for hashish. Note, however, that he expresses some doubt as to the list’s “genuineness” (p. 174).

⁹ For the Medieval Islamic underworld in general, see Bosworth (1976).

them, / for life's joys are short. // Take it [i.e., the hashish]—amber-scented, coloured / like the colour of myrtle, tinged with green' (Rosenthal 2015, 271).¹⁰

The suggestion that our author attempts to render cant terms is relevant also to the proper understanding of the events as they begin to unfold. In the midst of the revelry, the narrator reminds his companions that the activity that they intend to pursue is strictly punishable (ln. 12), and, as a precaution against discovery, instructs them to minimise talk with their hosts (lns 13–14). It is clear from the phrasing that the activity in question is of a sexual nature (see the comment to ln. 12), and since we are told explicitly that the carousal is a male-only affair (see ln. 22), it is evident that gay sex is intended. The narrator's reason for counselling his friends against engaging in excessive talk is as follows: *יִדְעוּ לְשׁוֹנֵינוּ / וְיָבִינוּ סוֹדֵינוּ* '[Lest] they perceive our speech / and understand our secret' (ln. 14). The first clause literally means '[Lest] they know/understand our language', and its precise import is not entirely clear. According to the logic of the narrative, it is reasonable to assume that the narrator and his companions are communicating with the *hadassim* in a common language, Arabic, since if the two groups' tongues were mutually unintelligible, there would be no point in the warning to minimise talk with the hosts. This being the case, the narrator may simply wish for his companions to refrain from discussing their sexual intentions out loud. This is the meaning conveyed by the translation I have given below. However, the specificity of the

¹⁰ For 'amber-scented' as a term for hashish, see Rosenthal (2015, 158).

term *lashon* ‘language’ may imply that what is at stake is a cant vocabulary, shared by the narrator and his companions, but foreign to the *hadassim*. Given that the text before us is a Hebrew, i.e., Jewish, *maqama*, it is tempting to think that the cant that the author has in mind are Jewish-Arabic terms connected to gays and gay sex. There are, in fact, several hints in our fragment specifying the Judaism of the narrator and his companions. First, his apprehensions of being discovered are couched in rabbinic legal language (see the comment to ln. 12). And secondly, he refers to himself and his fellows as an ‘*am gole* ‘exiled people’ (ln. 21). If this admittedly speculative suggestion is accepted, we must note that, for our purposes, it is immaterial whether or not such terms existed in the Jewish-Arabic vernacular of 13th-century Egypt (though, on general principles, they most likely did). The salient point is that our author attempted to use Hebrew as a literary vehicle in order to render, or hint at, their existence. There is at least one such Hebrew rendering, calqued directly from Arabic, in the *Maḥberet sheliah ha-ṣibbur*: זָרַע אֶל הַחֲרִירִים ‘He sows in a parched land (i.e., penetrates anally)’ (Huss 2002, 244 [lns 29–30]), borrowed directly from al-Ḥarīrī’s *maqama* 40: تَبْذُرُ فِي السَّبَاحِ ‘You sow in salt marshes’ (al-Ḥarīrī 2020, 217).¹¹

¹¹ The connection between ‘parched land’ and ‘salt marshes’ is established on the basis of וְשָׁכַן הַחֲרִירִים בַּמִּדְבָּר אֶרֶץ מְלָחָה וְלֹא תִשָּׁב ‘And he will dwell in a parched place in the wilderness in a land of salt without inhabitant’ (Jer. 17.6).

As the carousal winds on, the participants begin to fall off in a drunken stupor (lns 16–21).¹² Not everyone, however, has passed out. For through the ongoing din (ln. 22), the narrator perceives one of his fellows calling to him in the words of the Song of Solomon: מִשְׁכְּנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נָרוּצָה ‘Draw me after you, let us run (Song 1.4)’ (ln. 24). The use of the Song as an intertext to signal the onset of an erotic episode is, of course, entirely appropriate, since the book is the Hebrew *locus classicus* for this theme. The narrator decides to follow the beckoning youth, obviously with sexual intentions, as is made clear in ln. 25, which contains a second reference to the Song. A certain surrealistic quality is conferred on the scene by the use of another intertext: יֵצְאתִי לְדַעַת [הַ] לְוִמּוֹת הַלַּיְלָה / וּבִעַל הַסּוּד הַזֶּה ‘I went out to investigate this secret, / this dream-youth (Gen. 37.19)’ (ln. 27). The reference to Joseph is, of course, meant to evoke his proverbial beauty; but, beyond this, the biblical *ba‘al ha-ḥālōmōt* ‘dreamer’ is transformed here into a beautiful youth perceived as though in a

¹² A typological parallel to this aspect of the party may perhaps be found in the last scene of the shadow play *al-Mutayyam wa-l-yutayyim* by Ibn Dāniyāl (Egypt; 1248–1310), in which a succession of gay types, each one representing a specific sexual practice, joins a carousal one after the other. After presenting his ‘speciality’, each one drinks and passes out (see Rowson 1997, 180–82). Here, for example, is the end of Narjisa the effeminate’s (*mukhannath*) performance: فیرقص طربا في المقام / حتى یسكر وینام ‘Then he danced gaily in the place / until he became drunk and fell asleep’ (Ibn Dāniyāl 1992, ۱۱۰). In this case, the seriation of party guests is presumably suggested by the exigencies of staging as a shadow-puppet show.

dream. The surrealism is compounded by the stark contrast between the revellers, who are by now dead-drunk (lns 26 and 28) and the sudden and inexplicable “neighing” of women, who have thus far been absent from the scene,¹³ that the narrator hears as he sets out in pursuit of the love object (lns 28–29). The neighing is drawn from a biblical image of female licentiousness (see the comment to ln. 28), and although the fragment cuts off at this point, the reader is nevertheless left with the impression that the intrusion of the women into this otherwise homosexual scenario represents a potential obstacle to the consummation of narrator's desire for the youth. Thus far F1.

2.0. Edition of Fragment 1

Source, Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann 120; Previous edition: Schirmann (1965, 396); Editorial Sigla: ⚭ = doubtful reading; [...] = lacuna of part of a word; [...] = lacuna of one word or more; [⚭] = conjecturally restored lacuna; {⚭} = conjecturally supplied scribal omission

דְּבַר עֲזַרְאֵל בֶּן [י]וֹסֵף
 כְּלִיתָ [י לִשׁ] מוֹעַ הַמַּיִת נְבָלִים / וְהַמַּיִת נְבָלִים
 וַיִּמְשְׁכֵנִי ה[י] מֶן בְּמַצָּרִים / עַם חֲבוּרָה כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 מִבְּנֵי נֹא אָמוֹן וְכַפְתּוֹר / כְּפָרַח וְכַפְתּוֹר¹³
 אֶהְבֵּנוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת שָׂכָר / עַם בְּנֵי הַנֶּכֶר 5
 יִקְרָאוּ הַדְּסִים עַל שֵׁם שָׂרָם / אֲשֶׁר בָּשָׂר חֲמוּרִים בְּשָׂרָם
 וְנִבְּאוּ אֶל מְקוֹם אֶחָד מִמְּקוֹמוֹתָם / לְסִבּוֹת מִשְׁתֵּייתָם
 נִתְּנוּ לָנוּ יֵזֶן וְשָׂכָר וְזִרְעוֹנִים / וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עִמָּנוּ פָּנִים בְּפָנִים

¹³ Schirmann's emendation in ln. 11 (cf. the comment *ad loc.*) is conjectural.

יֵשׁ מַחֲלָלִים [ב]חֲלִילִים / וּבְכַנּוּרוֹת וּבִנְבָלִים
 10 יֵשׁ מְ[ר]קָדִים בַּפִּלִּים / וּמֵהֶם שָׁרִים גְּדוֹלִים
 שֶׁמֶחֶנוּ בְּמִרְאֵיתָם וּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם / וְשֶׁמֶחוּ בָנוּ הֵם וַעֲשִׂיהֶם

וְאוֹמֵר אֶל אֲחִי: אַתָּם [י]דַעְתֶּם כִּי מֶלֶקִין עַל לֹא טוֹבָה הַשְׁמוּעָה
 וְאַנְחֵנוּ [ו] בִּי עִם נְכָרִים אֶל תִּרְבּוּ עִמָּהֶם שִׁיחָה
 יִדְעוּ לְשׁוֹנֵינוּ / וְיִבִּינוּ סוֹדֵינוּ / וְיִסּוּר כִּיבּוּדֵינוּ
 15 וַיֹּאמְרוּ: טוֹב הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּה

לְקַח הַיֵּין מִמֶּנּוּ בְּכוּחוֹ / וְהַפִּיל כָּל רַע בְּשׁוּחוֹ
 רַב הַמִּרְבָּה וְהַמִּמְעִיט / וְהַלּוֹעֵט וְהַ[מ]לְעִיט
 וְהָאוֹמִיר / וְהַמְזַמֵּר
 בְּדַת כָּל הַשְּׁוֹתִים
 20 יֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ עוֹמְדִים עַל נַפְשָׁם / וְיֵשׁ הַפִּילוֹ לְאַרְץ רֹאשָׁם
 וְעַם גּוֹלָה הַיֵּין [ה]קָשָׁם

וּבִלְהֻקַּת הַבְּחוּרִים / וּבְשִׁמְחַת הַנְּעָרִים
 שֶׁמַּעֲתִי קוֹל מִחֲדָרִים / לְאַחַד מֵאֲחֵי הַבְּרוּרִים / וְהַבְּרִים
 מְשִׁכִּינִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נְרוּצָה
 25 וְלֹא הִי[...]. תִּי בִירִיו / עַד אַחֲרֵי כֵן אָרִיתִי פְרִי
 וּבִעַת עֲלֶתָה שֶׁכְּ[ב]ת הַשִּׁינָה עַל אֲחִי / וְלֹא נִשְׁאָר מֵהֶם חֵי
 יִצְאָתִי לְדַעַת הַסּוֹד הַזֶּה / וּבַעַל הַ[ח]לּוּמוֹת הַלְּזוֹ[ה]
 וְהִנֵּה דְמָמָה דְקָה וְעַם מַחֲשִׁים / וּכְמִצְהֵלוֹת הַנָּשִׁים
 אִמְרָתִי אֶל לִבִּי: גָּרִי הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה / וְזֶה דְרָכֵיהֶם בְּדַבְרֵיהֶם

2.1. Text-critical Notes

corrected from [משכני 24 הנע.] הנערים [הנערים 22 מ corrected from ש [משתייתם 7
 משכניו from

2.2. Commentary

הוֹרֵד שְׁאוֹל: For the meaning 'yearn' see Ps. 84.3. **המית... נבליים**: Based on **כבליית 2** **אֶזְאוֹגֶה הַמִּיתָ נְבִלִיךָ** 'Your pride has been brought down to Sheol, [alongside] the strains of your harps' (Isa. 14.11). In the present context, **נבליך** functions as a *šimmud*-homonym, meaning both 'harps' (cf. ln. 9) and 'wine-jars'. **3 ומשכני...** **חבורה**: For a similar usage of the verb, see **אַל־תִּמְשְׁכֵנִי עִם־דֹּשְׁעִים** 'Do not drag me along with the wicked' (Ps. 28.3). **במצרים**: The reference is likely to Cairo/Fuṣṭāṭ (see above, §1.0). **כבוכבי השמים**: Gen. 22.17, etc. **4 גוא אמן**: Alexandria; see Golb (1965, 267; 1974, 117). **וכפתור**: Damietta; see Golb (1965, 267; 1974, 126). **4 כפתור וכפתור**: The biblical doublet is **כִּפְתֹּר וּפְתֹר** (Exod. 25.33, etc.), reversed here in order to create the *šimmud*-rhyme. **6 הדסים... שרם**: See the discussion in §1.0. **בשרם**: Ezek. 23.20. An image of sexual license. **7 לסבות**: Instead of **לִסְבוֹא**; treating the root סב"א as III-y. **8 נתנו... זרעונים**: Combining the doublet **וַיָּבִיאוּ לָהֶם יִרְעָנִים** 'And he brought them vegetables' (Dan. 1.16). The word **זרעונים** here is almost certainly a euphemism for hashish (see above, §1.0). **וישבו... בפנים**: A humorous allusion to **וַיִּפְגַּע בְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה עִמָּךְ** 'Face to face the LORD spoke with you' (Deut. 5.4). Cf. the commentary to F2, ln. 13. **9 מבחלים בחלילים**: 1 Kgs 1.40. **ובכנורות ובנבלים**: Based on 1 Kgs 10.12 || 2 Chron. 9.11. **10 בפלילים**: The text appears to be corrupt and may perhaps be emended to **כְּאֵילִים** 'like rams' on the basis of Ps. 114.4, 6. **11 ועשיהם**: Schirmann emends here and reads **וְנִשְׁיָהֶם**. It ought to be noted, however, that the carousal is a male-only affair—cf. ln. 22. **12 מלקין... השמועה**: b. Qiddushin 81a. See also **יֵשׁ לְבֵית דִּין... לְהַלְקוֹת אָדָם שְׁמוּעָתוֹ רָעָה וְהֵעָם מְרַנְנִים עָלָיו שְׁהוּא עוֹבֵר עַל הָעֲרִיּוֹת** 'The rabbinical court... is to flog a person of ill repute denounced by the people for engaging in forbidden sexual relations' (Mishne Torah, Hilkhoh Sanhedrin 24.4). And cf. in the *Maḥberet sheliah ha-šibbur*, with reference to the youth-loving precentor: **וְכַמָּה פְּעָמִים שָׁמַעְנוּ עַל זֶה הָאִישׁ כִּי לֹא טוֹבָה שְׁמוּעָתוֹ / כִּי דֶרֶךְ נְעָרִים דָּתוֹ** 'And how many times have we heard about this man that he is of ill repute, / as taking up with youths is his religion' (Huss 2002, 244 [lns 28–29]). **לא טובה**: **13 שיחה**: Based on **וְאַל תִּרְבֶּה שִׁיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה** 'And do not engage in excessive talk with a woman' (m. 'Avot 1.5). **15 טוב... דיברתה**: Deut. 1.14. **16 רע**: An emendation to **רַעִי** 'my companions' would yield a slightly smoother text. In the manuscript, the word is vocalised **רַע** 'evil person'. **בשווחו**: A masculine by-form of **שווחה** 'pit'. **17 רב**: Apparently a corruption, perhaps a dittography generated by the following word. **המרבה והממעט**: Exod. 16.17. **20 הפילו לארץ ראשם**: The idiom appears in Est. 8.11; 9.16. **עומדים על נפשם**: Based on Lam. 2.10. **21 ועם גולה**: The reference is to the narrator and his companions, who are among foreigners—cf. lns 5, 13, 29. **24 משכני אחרך נרוצה**: Song 1.4. **25 אריתי פרו**: A synthesis of **וּפְרִיָו מְתוֹק לְחֻכִּי** 'And his fruit was sweet to my palate' (Song 2.3; cf. the commentary to F2, ln. 17) and **אֶרְיִיתִי מוֹרֵי עֵם־בְּשָׁמִי** 'I have gathered my myrrh and my spices' (Song 5.1). **26 עלתה שכבת השינה**: Based on **וַיִּתְּלֵה שְׁכַבְתָּ הַטָּל** 'And the dew-layer lifted' (Exod. 16.14). **27 ובעל**

החלומות הלזוה: Gen. 37.19. The quote hints at Joseph's proverbial beauty, and, by association, at that of the mysterious youth beckoning the narrator.

28 דמה דקה: 1 Kgs 19.12. **וכמזהלות הנשים:** Based on נאפיד ומצהלותיך זמת ונתיך. 'Your adulteries and [lustful] neighing, your licentious fornication' (Jer. 13.27).

2.3. Translation

Thus says 'Azar'el ben Yosef: // I yearned to hear the strains of harps / and the clanking of wine-jars, // and Time brought me together in Cairo / with a company *like the stars of the heavens* (Gen. 22.17), // denizens of Alexandria and Damietta / who were like a flower and its calyx. // ⁵ We took pleasure in drinking wine / with foreigners // called 'myrtles' (*hadassim*) after their shaykh, / *whose members were like those of asses* (Ezek. 23.20). // Now we came to a certain place of theirs / to imbibe of their potations. // They gave us intoxicating wine and 'vegetable stuff' / and sat with us *face to face* (Deut. 5.4). // Some *played on pipes* (1 Kgs 1.40) / *and on lyres and harps* (cf. 1 Kgs 10.12), // ¹⁰ others pranced like rams (?), / and among them were great singers. // We delighted in the way they looked and the things they did, / and they, along with their [...], delighted in us.

¹² I said to my brothers: You know that *the punishment for being of ill repute is flogging* (b. Qiddushin 81a) // As we are among a foreign people, do not engage in excessive talk with them, // [lest] they perceive our speech / and understand our secret / so that our good reputation should vanish. // ¹⁵ They replied: *What you propose is good* (Deut. 1.14).

¹⁶ The heady wine lay hold of some of us / and felled all [my] companions into its pit— // *him who consumed much and him who consumed little* (Exod. 16.17), / the greedy gulper and the one

who gave him to gulp, // the talker / and the music-maker— // as is the way with drunkards. // ²⁰ Some of us resisted, / but others' heads drooped to the ground. // So the wine dealt harshly with an exiled people.

²² Now in the company of lads / and the exuberance of the young men, // I heard a voice from within / belonging to one of my brilliant and pure brothers: // *Draw me after you, let us run* (Song 1.4). // ²⁵ And I did not [...] his [...] / until afterward, [when] I gathered his fruit. // So when the blanket of sleep had enveloped my brothers, / and not a single one of them remained sentient, // I went out to investigate this secret, / *this dream-youth* (Gen. 37.19). // But in the quiet stillness, the company having falling silent, / there was something like a [lustful] neighing of women. // I said to myself: Such are those who dwell in this place / and this their manner of speaking.

3.0. Edition of Fragment 2

Recently, Kedem Golden, within the context of his work on the Firkovitch collections, drew my attention to a leaf containing a fragment from the middle of a heretofore unknown *maqama*. In it, the narrator describes his erotic pursuit of a youth. For reasons that are elaborated below, I believe it quite likely that the text preserved in this fragment represents the continuation of the *maqama* whose beginning is attested in F1. However, so as not to prejudice the case and to enable the reader to form an impression of it independently of the latter, I have edited the fragment separately, and (with two minor, technical exceptions) framed my comments to it without reference to F1. The edition is followed

by an analysis of the contents, in which I present my argument for the connection between the two fragments.

Source: St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovitch Evr. IIA 1291

- [...] מן החרב[י]ם בעד האשנבים
ואם נכיר[ה]ו ורגליו עומדות על שערי בת רבים
בין ה[ג]ב[ו]רים מלומדי מלחמה אחוזי חרבים
נערכה אתם מלחמה ברש[פי] להבים
עד אשר נצילהו מידם ונת[על]סה באהבים 5
ונבאה עמו אל תוך א[פ]ריון עשה לו המלך שלמה
ונפארו ונהללו בשמו / בעטרה שעטרה לו אמו
ואמר אליהם: השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם
את האהבה אל תעירו / ואת התשוקה אל תעוררו
עד שיפוח יום שכל המשכילים / ונסו הצללים 10
דודי ירד לגנו שלחיו פרדס רמונים
ובמגדלות מר[קח]ים ללקוט שושנים
ולא תוכלון ראותו פנים אל פנים
לכנה בנותי שובנה מקום תחנ[ת]יכם / ומשכן אהליכם
ואנוכי ורעיוני נלכה עד כה ונשתחוה ונשובה אליכם 15
כמעט מ[ה]ם עברתי / והצללים משכלי העברתי
וגן נעול פתחתי / בצל חמדי וישבתי
ואת שאהבה נפשי בקשתי
מצאוני השומרים / הכו[ני] פצעוני ושמו אתי באסורים
מקום אשר אסירי המלך אסורים 20
ואמר אליהם: מה לכם תדכאוני / [ו]למפגע לפניכם תשימוני
חדלו לכם ממני / ו[... ..]ם מה חדל אני
רשפי אהבה תוך לבבי בוערים / [כ]לפיד אש [ב]עמי[ר]ים
ונהייתי / ונחליתי / ונדכתי

25 וְדִלּוּתִי / וְדִקּוּתִי

וְסָרַעְפִי מִתֵּימֹתֶיךָ וְתַמְהִיךָ / וְעַל דּוּדֵי צַח וְאָדוּם רַעֲיוֹנִי צִמְאִים וְכַמְהִים

וְאֶנְכִי עֵינִי וְצִמְאָה וְלֹא יֵרָאוּ אֱלֹהִים

וְיִקְחוּנִי וְלִבִּי תַמְרָמֶר / וְיִגְ[וּ] חוּנִי בְּמִשְׁמֶר / וְאֶשָּׂא מִשְׁלִי וְאוֹמֶר

צָבִי חֵן הוּא אֲשֶׁר בָּלָה בְּשָׂרִי / וְשֵׁת אוֹתִי עָלַי עָרֵשׁ מְזוֹרֵם

יְגוֹן חֲשָׁקוֹ נִתְּנִי בְּשׁוֹמֵם / וְלֹא אֶרְאֶה וְלֹא עֵינִי מֵאוֹרִים 30

וְדִלּוּתִי וְדִקּוּתִי עָדִי בִּי /

3.1. Text-critical Notes

תחנוניכם in the MS 14 שוּשִׁינִים | מרחקים in the MS 12 מרחקים
ה superscript 18 שֶׁאֵהָבָה in the MS 17 מִכֶּם emended from 16 מהם
in the MS 23 בלפיד | בעמיר in the MS 22 כלפיד
ולו apparently corrected from 30 וינוחלי in the MS 28 מעמידים

3.2. Commentary

1 מן... האשנבים: The image is of women peering through the lattices of their apartments into a public space. מן החרקים: Based on 'peeping through the lattices' (Song 2.9). בעד האשנבים: Based on 'אם
'From the window peers down Sisera's mother... through the lattice' (Judg. 5.28). 2-3 חרבים... נכירהו: The import of the image seems to be that the object of the women's desire is standing in full view in front of their homes, surrounded by males who are guarding him. 2 ורגליו... רבים: The phraseology combines 'וְעָמְדוּ רַגְלָיו בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עַל־הַר הַזֵּיתִים' (Zech. 14.4) and 'עַל־שַׁעַר בֵּת־רָבִים' (Song 7.5). It is likely that the 'standing legs/feet' are a deliberate phallic image. שערי: The vocalisation as a singular follows the verse. 3 בין... חרבים: Based on 'הִנֵּה מִטָּתוֹ שְׁלֹשְׁלֹמָה שֹׁשִׁים גְּבָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ... כָּלֶם אֲחִזִּי חֶרֶב מִלְמָדִי' (Song 8.6) and 'Behold Solomon's bed, surrounded by sixty warriors... all of whom grasp the sword, trained for war' (Song 3.7-8). 4 ברשפי להבים: For the conjectural restoration see 'רֶשֶׁפִּיהָ רֶשֶׁפִּי אֵשׁ' its [i.e., love's] sparks are sparks of fire' (Song 8.6) and 'רֶשֶׁפִּי־קֶשֶׁת' 'fiery sparks [i.e., stinging arrows] of the bow' (Ps. 76.4). The image is simultaneously martial and erotic (cf. ln. 23). 5 ונתעלסה באהבים: Prov. 7.18. 6 אפריון... שלמה: Song 3.9. 7 אמו: Song 3:11. 8-10 הצללים... השבעתי: A synthesis of Song 2.7 (=3.5) and 8.4 together with 2.17 and 4.6. 10 הצללים... יום: This metaphor is reprised in ln. 16. The word 'intellect' is a technical term in medieval philosophy (cf. §4.0). 11 דודי ירד: Song 6.2 (cf. the following line). שלחיו פרדם רמונים: Based on Song 4.13,

where the image is used of the Shulamite. **12** **ובמגדלות מרקחים**: The phrase is drawn from Song 5.13. **ללקוט שושנים**: Song 6.2 (cf. the previous line). **13** **ולא...** A synthesis of **לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאֹת אֶת־פָּנַי** 'You will not be able to see my face' (Exod. 33.20) and **רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים** 'I saw God face to face' (Gen. 32.31). Cf. the commentary to F1, ln. 8. The reference here is apparently to the fact that the youth is veiled, but the verse from Exodus also has strong philosophical overtones (cf. §4.0). For the veiling of a youth as representing his sexual unavailability, see the *Maḥberet sheliah ha-šibbur*, where the precentor complains of his frustrated efforts to seduce the young man: **וּבְקָל זֹאת לֹא גִלָּה פָנָיו מֵאִפְרוֹ / וְלֹא פָתַח קִגּוּר חֲגוּרוֹ** 'And for all that he did not remove the veil from his face / nor did he uncinch his belt' (Huss 2002, 243 [ln. 16]). **14** **לכנה בנותי שובנה**: Based on Ruth 1.12. **תחנניכם**: The manuscript reads **תחנניכם**. The emendation relies on the graphic similarity between **נ** and **ת**, and is based on **תְּחַנֵּנִי** 'my encampment' (2 Kgs 6.8). **ומשכן אלהיכם**: The phrase is based on **מִשְׁכַּן אֱהִי מוֹעֵד** 'the tabernacle of the tent of meeting' (Exod. 39.32, etc.) and perhaps also **מִשְׁכְּנֹת (רָשָׁעִים)** 'the tent of the dwellings (of the wicked)' (Job. 21.28). **15** **ואנוכי... אליכם**: Based on **וְאֲנִי וְהַנְּעָר וְכוּ'** 'And the youth and I', etc. (Gen. 22.5). The replacement of **נער** 'youth' by **רעיוני** 'my imaginings' is very noteworthy, since the former suits the context perfectly. It seems that **רעיוני** is meant to hint strongly at **נער**, all of whose consonants are repeated in it, and to refer to the narrator's erotic intentions (cf. ln. 26), while at the same time conferring on the line a whiff of philosophy (cf. §4.0). **16** **והצללים משכלי העברתי**: See ln. 10 and the commentary *ad loc.* **17** **וגן נעול פתחתי**: A sexual metaphor. **וגן נעול**: Song 4.12. **בצלו חמדתי וישבתי**: Song 2.3. Cf. the commentary to F1, ln. 25. **18** **ואת...** **באסורים**: Plural of **אָסוּר** 'bond'. **20** **מקום... אסורים**: Gen. 39.20. **21** **מה לכם תדכאוני**: Based on Isa. 3.15. **מה חדל אני**: Ps. 39.5. **22** **תוך לבבי בוערים**: The image is based on Jer. 20.9. **כלפיד אש בעמירים**: Based on Zech. 12.6. **24** **ונהייתי ונחליתי**: Dan. 8.27. **26** **וימת לבו בקרבו**: For a similar metaphor, see **וַיָּמָת לִבּוֹ בְּקִרְבּוֹ** 'And his heart died within him' (1 Sam. 25.37). **27** **דודי צה ואדום**: Song 5.10. **דודי צה ואדום**: For this pair see Ps. 63.2. **28** **ולבי חמרמר**: This collocation is attested in the *Maqāmat al-Tajnis* of Yosef ben Tanḥum ha-Yerushalmi (Egypt; born ca 1262, died after 1330), where it also rhymes with a first-person formula introducing a poem: **וְאָנֹכִי מְקֻמְרִי / וְאָנֹכִי מְקֻמְרִי** 'And I groaned with an anguished heart when I remembered my home, / and spoke and said' (Dishon 2005, 413 [ln. 15]). **29–31** **עירש מזורים**: Lam. 3.4. **עירש מזורים**: A modification of the phrase **עֵרֶשׁ דָּוִי** 'sickbed' (Ps. 41.4). The word **מזור** 'wound, injury' is not attested in the plural in the Bible. **31** **ודלותי ודקותי**: See ln. 25.

3.3. Translation

[...] from the windows, through the lattices, // and if we recognize him, with his legs standing *by the gate of the daughter of chiefs* (Song 7.5) // among battle-trying warriors grasping swords, // we wage war against them with fiery blades // ⁵ until we rescue him from their hands and then *disport ourselves in love* (Prov. 7.18), // entering with him *the palanquin that King Solomon made* (Song 3.9). // There we praise and extol him by name, / *with the crown that his mother gave him* (Song 3.11).

⁸ I said to them: *I adjure you, O maidens of Zion* (Song 2.7, etc.) // Wake not love / nor arouse desire // ¹⁰ *until the thought-day of the intelligent gently blows / and the shadows flee* (Song 2.17, etc.). // *My beloved has gone down to his garden* (Song 6.2)— / *his limbs an orchard of pomegranates* (cf. Song 4.13)— // *to pick lilies* (Song 6.2) *in perfumed banks* (Song 5.13), // and you will not be able to see him *face to face* (Gen. 32.31). // Go, my daughters, return to the place of your encampment / and your tent dwellings, // ¹⁵ *whereas I and my fantasy-youth will go yonder, worship and then return to you* (Gen. 22.5).

¹⁶ Hardly had I left them behind / and dispelled the shadows from my thoughts // than I opened the *locked garden* (Song 4.12), / *delighted in sitting in his shade* (Song 2.3) // and *sought my soul's beloved* (cf. Song 3.1). // *The watchmen found me, / beat and wounded me* (Song 5.7) and put me in bonds // ²⁰ *where the king's prisoners are kept* (Gen. 39.20). // I said to them: Why do you crush me / and make me your target? // Let me alone / [...] *how worthless I am* (Ps. 39.5). // The sparks of love burn in my heart / *like a fiery torch among sheaves* (Zech. 12.6). // *I am overcome /*

with sickness (Dan. 8.27) / and crushed, // ²⁵ humbled / and pulverised, // my inward thoughts mortified and aghast / and my fantasies thirst and yearn for *my beloved, radiant and ruddy* (Song 5.10). // *I was faint and thirsted, but they had no fear of God* (cf. Deut. 25.18). // So they took me, my heart in anguish, / and left me in custody. / And I took up my theme and said:

It's a comely gazelle-youth who's wasted my flesh
Leaving me in a sickbed.

³⁰ The pangs of my desire for him have left me desolate,
Unable to see, though my eyes were luminaries.
I am humbled and pulverised, so that in me

4.0. Contents of Fragment 2 and Possible Relation to Fragment 1

F2 opens in *medias res*, with a group of women addressing the narrator (lns 1–7). The speech, a large component of which consists of a pastiche of quotes from the Song, is highly symbolic and allusive in places, so that its precise import is difficult to pin down. The gist, however, is as follows. The women describe themselves as peering through the window-lattices of their quarters (ln. 1), on the lookout for a comely youth. When they espy him outside, standing by the gate of their residence (ln. 2) and surrounded by male admirers seeking to somehow reserve him for themselves (ln. 3), they propose to engage the males in a battle (ln. 4) whose outcome will be their own victory. The prize is the youth, whom they will triumphantly bear off in order to disport with him in lovemaking (lns 5–7).

The narrator, whose speech is equally allusive and also made up in large measure of quotes from the Song, seeks to subdue the women's ardour (lns 8–9), at the same time asking them to allow him to regain the full use of his consciousness—i.e., presumably to sober up (ln. 10). He begins to speak of the youth as his beloved (lns 11–12) and indicates that they will not be allowed to see his face, thereby denying their erotic claim on him (ln. 13; cf. below). The speech to the women concludes with him explicitly sending them away (ln. 14), and indicating his intention that he and the youth go their own way (ln. 15).

Having left the women behind, the narrator makes his sexual advance (lns 16–18). Due to the vagueness of the language, it is impossible to know whether he consummates his desire or is merely on the point of doing so, when suddenly watchmen appear on the scene and arrest him (lns 19–20). He remonstrates with them, attempting to arouse their pity with his lovesickness, but to no avail (lns 21–28). Here he begins to recite a love poem describing his yearning for the beloved (lns 29–31), and at this point F2 cuts off.

I have already noted that the language employed in F2 is highly allusive, being built up in large part from a stringing together of quotes from the Song (along with other biblical books). Within this general framework, it is possible to perceive the use of vocabulary that evokes philosophical discourse. Thus, in admonishing the women, the narrator adjures them not to arouse desire *עד שיִפּוּחַ יוֹם שֶׁכָּל הַמְּשָׁכִילִים / וְנִסּוּ הַצִּלְלִים* 'until the thought-day of the intelligent gently blows / and the shadows flee (Song 2.17, etc.)' (ln. 10; cf. also ln. 16). The phrasing here consists mostly

of a fragment from the Song that evokes a lovers' tryst in a garden, and, in referring to the restoration of his *śekhēl*, the narrator apparently means simply that he wants to sober up. However, the word also brings to mind a philosophical context, in which it would be a technical term meaning 'intellect'. Similarly, the narrator's insistence in ln. 13 that the women will not be able to see the youth face to face is, on the surface, a rejection of their sexual claim on him. At the same time, the phraseology is based here on Exod. 33.20, a biblical *locus classicus* invoked in philosophical discussions of the impossibility of direct and full intellectual apprehension of the metaphysical Divine source lying behind the physical world. In ln. 15, quoting a verse that is perfectly suited to conveying the narrator's claim on the youth, the author replaces *na'ar* 'youth' with *ra'yonay* 'my fantasies': וְאֶנּוֹכִי וְרַעְיוֹנַי גָּלְכָה 'whereas I and my fantasy-youth will go yonder (Gen. 22.5)'. The substituted word can easily be understood to refer to the narrator's erotic fantasy, but it is also a philosophical term, signifying the mental faculty of fantasy/imagination. Given their frequency, it seems evident that such usages are not accidental. And despite the fact that the incompleteness of the context renders uncertain precise evaluation of their significance, one may still venture the guess that their purpose is to create a vague aura of philosophical allegory around this tale of homoerotic pursuit, an aim that is moreover facilitated by the extensive use of allusive quotation from the Song, whose allegorical interpretation is a commonplace of Jewish culture.

It seems to me likely that F2 is a continuation of the narrative begun in F1, there being but a short gap between the two

fragments. In terms of speech situation, both are narrated in the first person, with the narrator's reported speech to others being introduced by the formula *wa-omar 'el* 'and I said to'—see F1 ln. 12; F2 lns 8 and 21. Within this coherent frame, a strong case can be made for narrative continuity. The fear of discovery and punishment of homosexual activity that is expressed in F1 lns 12–14 may be a foreshadowing of the actual activity and the narrator's subsequent apprehension in F2 lns 17–28. And the stress on intoxication at the carousal in F1 lns 16–21, 26, and 28 may be the background for the narrator's references to sobering up in F2 lns 10 and 16. Finally, the unexpected appearance of wanton women on the scene, with a hint of interference in the narrator's pursuit of the youth, in F1 lns 28–29 is a very plausible background for the speech of the sexually predatory women in F2 lns 1–7.

Perhaps the main argument against attributing F1 and F2 to the same *maqama* lies in the difference in tone/register between the two. Whereas F1 is composed in a style that contains evocations of the demimonde atmosphere in which its narrative unfolds, the style of F2 relies in large part on a pastiche of quotations from the Song in order to allusively describe the erotic pursuit of an alluring youth without actually naming body parts or sex acts, the whole being, moreover, sprinkled with a pinch of philosophical pseudo-allegory. However, it is just possible that the shift in tone is deliberate, and that it is signalled towards the end of F1, in ln. 24, at the point at which the youth beckons the narrator with the words מְשַׁכְּנִי אַחֲרַיָּךְ נָרוּצָה 'Draw me after you, let us run (Song 1.4)'. This is the first place in F1 in which the Song is quoted, and it is certainly no accident that another allusion

follows hard on its heels in ln. 25: אָרִיתִי פֵרִי 'I gathered his fruit' (combining Song 2.3 [cf. F2 ln. 17] and 5.1). If we follow this line of interpretation, the seemingly innocuous reference in F1 ln. 8 to the *hadassim* sitting 'face to face' with the narrator and his companions retroactively becomes a sexual innuendo that is reprised in F2 ln. 13 in the narrator's denial of the women's erotic rights to the youth he is pursuing.

Ultimately, data are insufficient to establish with certainty whether or not F1 and F2 represent the same *maqama*, though this seems to me to be quite likely. I have presented them here separately with a view to illuminating some of their respective literary qualities, and in the hope that a future discovery will enrich our knowledge of the Medieval Hebrew *maqama* by making it possible either to conclusively confirm or to refute my suggestion.

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SOME NOTES ON MELODY: SA‘ADYA GAON AND WHY ‘NAGHMA’ MEANS ‘VOWEL’ IN JUDAEO-ARABIC*

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The concept of ‘melody’ has a wide range of technical uses in the history of the Hebrew language. Depending on the context of a particular text, the word *ne‘ima* (and its Aramaic and Arabic cognates: *ne‘mā/ne‘mā* and *naghma*) may denote at least eight distinct concepts in linguistics and musicology: (1) sound/phoneme, (2) tone, (3) melody/mode/tune, (4) tonality, (5) rhythmic beat, (6) vocal note, (7) accent, or (8) vowel (Allony 1971, 8; Blau 2006, 706). However, the definition of ‘vowel’ is unique among these eight, as it is only attested for a few centuries in the early medieval period (Allony 1971, יב), and derives specifically from the Judaeo-Arabic form of the word, *naghma* (sometimes

* Thank you to Noah van Renswoude for his assistance with the music theory aspects of this paper. Special thanks to Geoffrey Khan for always telling me that *naghma* means ‘melody’ and then defining it as ‘vowel’ in his own book (Khan 2020, II:18). Like so many things, I could not have done this without him.

naghma). This fact is remarkable due to *naghma*'s contemporaneous attestation in Classical Arabic, where it indicates 'melody', 'note', 'tone', 'mode', and 'sound', but *not* 'vowel'.

This paper examines the meanings of *naghma* and its cognates to demonstrate that the definition of vowels as *naghamāt* 'melodies, notes' is specific to medieval Judaeo-Arabic. It then discusses the beginning of this usage during the career of Sa'adya Gaon (d. 942) and explores why he adapted a musicological term for linguistic analysis.

1.0. 'Melody' as 'Vowel' in Judaeo-Arabic

The Judaeo-Arabic term *naghma* 'vowel' appears in the Hebrew linguistic tradition alongside a variety of other words for 'vowels', including 'kings' (*melakhim*, *mulūk*), 'symbols' (*simanim*), 'movements' (*ḥarakāt*, *tenu'ot*), 'sounding ones' (*muṣawwitāt*), and 'inflections' (*'anḥā*) (Khan 2020, I:305 fn. 78; see also, Posegay 2021b, 129–33). Nehemia Allony (1971, ג–ט) compiled a number of sources in which *naghma* has this meaning. They are mainly Masoretic and grammatical texts written between the tenth and thirteenth centuries.

The earliest of these sources is the fifth chapter of Sa'adya Gaon's Hebrew grammar,¹ titled *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham* 'The Discourse on Melody', which he wrote prior to 931 (Malter 1921, 44 fn. 57). *Nagham* in the title here initially appears to mean 'melody' or 'tone', like the Classical Arabic definitions mentioned

¹ Known as *Kitāb Faṣīḥ Lughā al-'Ibrāniyyīn* 'The Book of the Eloquence of the Language of the Hebrews' and *Kutub al-Lughā* 'The Books of the Language'. See Dotan (1997).

above, but Sa'adya then moves into a discussion of Hebrew recitation. He states: "We will mention the explanation of the five components which are the parts of the *nagham* of this language. The first among them are the seven elements of *nagham*" (Skoss 1952, 290, lns 6–7).² These seven 'elements' or 'fundamentals' (*mabādī*) are the seven vowels of Tiberian Hebrew. Sa'adya then refers to each vowel as *naghma* (PL *naghamāt*), using the term more than ten times as he lays out the articulation points of his famous 'vowel scale' (see Skoss 1952; Allony 1971, ב; Morag 1979, 89–90; Dotan 2007, 623–24).

He applies similar language in his *Commentary on Sefer Yešira* 'The Book of Creation', written in 931 and also known by its Arabic title, *Tafsīr Kitāb al-Mabādī* 'The Interpretation of the Book of the Elements' (see Lambert 1891; Hayman 2004; and Khan 2020, II:127–29). According to *Sefer Yešira*, God created the universe using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which carved out the world and represent aspects of reality. Sa'adya comments, "They [the 22] join the seven doubled ones [i.e., *bgdkprt*] with them, and they connect the seven *naghamāt* to them, I mean: *qameš*, *pataḥ*, *ḥolem*, *segol*, *ḥireq*, *šere*, and *shureq*,³ so they become 36" (Lambert 1891, 42, lns 9–10; Allony 1971,

² Unless otherwise noted, all translations of medieval sources are my own.

³ Based on the orthography in Lambert's edition and other sources, Sa'adiya probably pronounced these vowel names: *qameš*, *pataḥ*, *ḥelem*, *segol*, *ḥereq*, *šere*, and *shereq* (Steiner 2005, 377; Khan 2020, I:261–64; Posegay 2021a, 40–41).

ן). This passage is quite explicit—for Saʿadya, *naghma* is a technical term for ‘vowel’.

Allony’s other sources that corroborate the description of Hebrew vowels as ‘melodies’ or ‘tones’ all depend on this Judaeo-Arabic term, and do not seem to be translations from the use of Hebrew *neʿima* as ‘sound’ or ‘accent’ (e.g., in *Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim*; Dotan 1967, 107, ln. 13, 108, ln. 23, 115, lns 2–3). One source is a Masoretic treatise identified in a manuscript at the Bodleian Library which uses *naghma* ‘vowel’ as an equivalent to *siman* ‘symbol’ and *malik* ‘king’ (Allony 1943, 148b, lns 9–13; 1971, ן). Another is the work known as *Maḥberet ha-Tijan*, an anonymous Judaeo-Arabic grammatical text produced in Yemen around the thirteenth century. It reads: “The vowels are the points, and they are called *naghāmāt*” (A. Neubauer 1891, 15, lns 21–22; Allony 1971, ן).

Allony also cites Dunash ben Tamīm’s commentary on *Sefer Yešira*, which postdates Saʿadya’s commentary. While Dunash’s Arabic original is lost, there is an anonymous Hebrew translation from approximately the tenth century which does use the Hebrew form *neʿima* for ‘vowel’. The translator writes, regarding the *matres lectionis* letters (ʾalef, waw, and yod): “And these three letters are distinguished by their sounds and their continuation, and they contain the rest of the *neʿimot* in all languages” (Allony 1971, ן; see also Eldar 1983, 46). The passage continues by associating Hebrew *neʿimot* with *matres* and articulation points within the mouth, seemingly influenced by Saʿadya’s descriptions of the vowel scale in *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham*. The Hebrew cognate *neʿima* must have been the translator’s most natural gloss for

naghma in Dunash's Arabic. Consequently, this work does not represent a usage of *ne'ima* 'vowel' independent of Sa'adya.

A second Hebrew source that Allony identifies is *Sefer ha-Eṣamim ha-Ḥamisha* 'The Book of the Five Substances', a fragmentary translation of a work attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles. More accurately, it was probably written in Arabic by a medieval 'pseudo-Empedocles' (Kaufmann 1899; De Smet 2011). It may even be, as some have argued, merely a 'pseudo-Empedoclean' type of text by a philosopher who reflects a particular strand of Arabic Neoplatonism (De Smet 1998; Stroumsa 2002). Either way, an anonymous Jewish scholar translated the Arabic version into Hebrew using *ne'ima* to mean 'vowel' (Allony 1971, יב). Like Dunash's commentary, this translation postdates Sa'adya and was likely influenced by his use of *naghma*.

Several more examples of *naghma* 'vowel' have been identified since Allony's initial assessment of the term (see his list, 1971, יב fn. 16). Two are anonymous Judaeo-Arabic Masoretic treatises, known as *muṣawwītāt* texts (see Eldar 1986), that Allony published with Israel Yeivin (1985) based on Cairo Geniza fragments. One of them, found in T-S Ar.53.1,⁴ reads: "As for the [accent] *ṭres*,⁵ it comes in two types, one being with two staves, which is when no *naghma* remains in the word; I mean, nothing of the points" (Allony and Yeivin 1985, 93, lns 32–35; also *naghma* on 94, line 38). That is, when *geresh* occurs on the last

⁴ MS Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter Arabic 53.1.

⁵ By which the author means *geresh*.

syllable (and, thus, last vowel) of a word, it is written with two strokes. The second *muṣawwītāt* text, preserved in T-S Ar.31.124, is more fragmentary, but it also uses *naghma* for ‘vowel’ a few times (Allony and Yeivin 1985, 106, lns 3, 15). Other instances appear in the extant Arabic text of the appendices to Judah ben David Ḥayyūj’s *Kitāb al-Tanqīṭ* ‘The Book of Pointing’, identified and edited by Ilan Eldar (again from Geniza fragments; Eldar 2001, 150–51; see Nutt 1870, 126–32).⁶

Furthermore, T-S NS 301.20 and T-S NS 301.22 together contain a partial unidentified text that refers to *nagham* ‘vocalisations’ collectively as one of the two essential aspects of language (the other is *aḥrāf* ‘letters’). It reads: “As for the *nagham* of the Hebrews, they are seven, and it is necessary for me to mention them first, [for] speech depends on them completely.”⁷ The beginning of a chapter of the work follows, titled *Al-Qawl ‘alā al-Nagham* (T-S NS 301.22r, ln. 25), quite similar to Sa’adya’s *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham*. It is highly likely that this writer was aware of Sa’adya’s work. Another author we can be confident read *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham* is the anonymous Masorete who wrote *Kitāb Naḥw al-‘Ibrānī* ‘The Book of Hebrew Inflection’. They refer to vowels as *naghamāt* while presenting a version of the Hebrew vowel scale not unlike Sa’adya’s (Eldar 1981, 116, lns 2, 4–6),

⁶ *Naghma* appears in Eldar’s edition (2001, 157, ln. 119, 158, ln. 141, 159, lns 161, 166, 176–77, 160, ln. 197, 161, lns 211–12, 221).

⁷ T-S NS 301.22r, lns 18–20. My translation is based in part on the Judeo-Arabic transcription that Aharon Maman produced for the Friedberg Genizah Project database. See also *nagham* in T-S NS 301.20r, ln. 26.

but this time incorporating Arabic inflectional terminology (see Posegay 2021b, 291–92).

Finally, in *Hidāyat al-Qārī* 'The Guide for the Reader', Abū al-Faraj Hārūn (d. ca 1050) uses *naghma* for 'vowel' in several places. One is at the beginning of his section on vowels, where he does not assume that the reader already knows the definition of *naghma*, writing: "The section 'on the *mulūk*'; but if you wanted to say 'on the *naghamāt*' or 'on the *'anḥā*', then that has the same meaning" (Khan 2020, II:40). Another comes when he presents his own version of the vowel scale with Arabic inflectional terms, producing a passage that is again reminiscent of *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham* and *Kitāb Naḥw al-'Ibrānī* (Khan 2020, II:42; Posegay 2021b, 302–4). Abū al-Faraj seems to prefer *malik* for 'vowel', but he recognises that his Masoretic sources also used *nagham* and *naḥw*.

As Allony has already suggested (1971, ב), Sa'adya in the early tenth century was most likely the first person who referred to Hebrew vowels as *naghma*. If it was not him personally, then it was someone shortly before him, perhaps a teacher or a Masorete in the same sphere of linguistic scholarship. This usage was thus, at least initially, idiosyncratic to him, and the other texts mentioned above must belong to linguistic traditions with access to his work. It is doubtful that Sa'adya was unaware of the use of Hebrew *ne'ima* to mean 'accent', 'tone', or 'melody', so the reapplication of the cognate term *naghma* to designate 'vowel' appears to be a deliberate choice to provide additional nuance. *Hidāyat al-Qārī* reveals how Masoretic scholars might have perceived a

relationship between *ḥaraka* ‘movement, vowel’ and *naghma* ‘melody, note’.

Disjunctive and conjunctive accents, by their nature, cause the letter to move. They make a ‘note’ (*naghma*) or ‘notes’ (*naghamāt*) in it, but a motionless letter [i.e., with silent *shewa*] cannot properly have a note at all, for the note is the ‘vowel’ (*ḥaraka*). (Khan 2020, II:153, lns 956–58)

Abū al-Faraj describes how the Hebrew accents each introduce a ‘note’ (*naghma*) or short series of notes in cantillation. A performer intones these notes by lengthening or modulating the vowel sound of the accented syllable. By contrast, an unvocalised ‘motionless’ consonant cannot be lengthened to follow the notes of cantillation. Since every *naghma* is conveyed aurally through a *ḥaraka* ‘vowel’, Abū al-Faraj asserts that the *naghma* is the *ḥaraka*. That is, the note is the vowel. Conversely, a vowel is a musical note. A *ḥaraka* can be a *naghma*.

The issue here is that this explanation for the conflation of *ḥaraka* and *naghma* comes a century after Sa‘adya and does not appear in his own works on language and music. We also know that Abū al-Faraj drew from *Kutub al-Lughā* when writing *Hidāyat al-Qārī*. Inevitably, his knowledge of Sa‘adya’s terminology in *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham* influenced his understanding of *ḥaraka* and *naghma*. Nevertheless, Abū al-Faraj’s reasoning is likely the same line of thinking that led Sa‘adya to conclude that *naghma* was a serviceable term for ‘vowel’ in his grammar of Hebrew. This observation leads us to the real question: given so many alternatives (*mulūk*, *simanin*, *ḥarakāt*, *muṣawwītāt*, *’anḥā’*), why did Sa‘adya define the vowels in terms of music?

2.0. The Unique Meaning of Judaeo-Arabic *Naghma* in Sa'adya's Medieval Context

As mentioned, *naghma* is a Classical Arabic word that is widely attested in the periods before and after Sa'adya's lifetime. One might then expect that his use of *naghma* 'vowel' follows a specific technical usage also found in Classical Arabic grammar, but this is not the case. Several different definitions do appear already in the earliest Arabic lexicon, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* 'The Book of the ʿAyn' (Makhzumi and al-Samarra'i 1985; E. Neubauer 1998, 43–112; see Schoeler 2006, 142–63; Sellheim 2012). They include a 'sound' or 'tone' of speech (*jars al-kalām*), a 'sound' made by a donkey or bird, and a 'sound' numerated in music theory (Talmon 1997, 132). Arabic lexicographers cite these and similar definitions for *naghma* throughout the medieval period, often applying it to non-speech 'sounds' and 'soft' or 'nice' speech (Kazimirski 1860, 1301; Lane 1863, 1847; Hawramani 2022),⁸ but they do not record instances of *naghma* as 'vowel'.

An alternative hypothesis, previously suggested by this author (Posegay 2021b, 84 fn. 41, 131), is that Judaeo-Arabic *naghma* 'vowel' may be a translation of a technical usage of the Syriac cognate term *neʿmtā*, but this again does not seem to be

⁸ Referenced on 3 March 2022 from the *نغم* and *جرس* pages (nos. 69957 and 139244, respectively) of *The Arabic Lexicon* website, maintained by Ikram Hawramani. Note specifically the entries from *Al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Lughā* by Ibn ʿAbbād (d. ca 995), *Tāj al-Lughā wa-Ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿArabīya* by al-Jawharī (d. 1003), and *Al-Muḥkam wa-al-Muḥīṭ al-Aʿẓam* by al-Mursī (d. 1066). All three are linked in the bibliography of this paper.

the case. Similar to Arabic lexicographers, the Syriac bishop Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) indicates the ‘sound’ or ‘tone’ of a trumpet with *neʿmtō* (Duval 1908, 28, ln. 11). Slightly later, the grammarian Dawid bar Pawlos (fl. ca 770–800) uses the plural *neʿmtō* to refer to ‘melodies’ or ‘songs’, but in the same discussion refers to vowels as “the ‘sounds’ (*qōle*) without written letters” (Gottheil 1893, cxii, ln. 6–cxiii, ln. 3; Posegay 2021b, 142–43). Then in the ninth century, ʾIshoʿdad of Merv uses *neʿmtō* for ‘clear’ sounds, including clear or strong speech (van den Eynde 1962, 43, ln. 20, 239, ln. 23), while his contemporary, Moses bar Kepha, writes, “Just as things illuminated in plain view are for the eyes, so for the ears are things with sounds sweet of ‘melody’ (*neʿmtō*) and lovely songs” (Varghese 2014, ch. 26). Like *naghma* in Classical Arabic, early medieval *neʿmtō* meant ‘sound’, ‘tone’, and ‘melody’, among other similar glosses (Payne Smith 1903, 343; Arzhanov 2021, 135), but not ‘vowel’.

The participation of Syriac scholars in the ninth-century translation movement led to the compilation of numerous Arabic glosses for Syriac technical terms, including *neʿmtō*. Two of the most prominent lexicographers who recorded these glosses are ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī (d. ca 900) and Ḥasan bar Bahlul (fl. 942–968). They compiled the two largest surviving Syriac-Arabic lexica from this period (Butts 2009; Van Rompay 2011). Both utilised lexicographical material from earlier in the ninth century, supposedly even including the lost lexicon of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873). As expected, Ibn ʿAlī and Bar Bahlul gloss *neʿmtō* as *naghma*, which they define in familiar ways. However, they also put the term in context with Syriac church music, connecting it to the field of

musicology that emerged in the wake of the translation movements.

Ibn 'Alī first gives a brief definition, writing, “*Ne'mtō*: when singular, is *naghma*. [Plural] *ne'mtō* and *rekne*: are the *al-'alḥān*, *al-karākhīn*, and *al-nagham*” (Gottheil 1908, 75). In this context, the Arabic term *'alḥān* (SG *laḥn*) usually indicates ‘melodies’, ‘tunes’, or musical ‘modes’, similar to Hebrew *ne'ima* (and indeed, *nagham*) (Werner 1959, 374, 585, 587).⁹ *'Alḥān* additionally has the meaning ‘accents’ in Masoretic sources (Khan 2020, II:10, 24, 49, 151). Besides *naghma*, Ibn 'Alī also equates *ne'mtō* with *rekno*, which he defines elsewhere as *laḥn al-karākh*, using the singular form of the plural *karākhīn* seen above (Gottheil 1928, 393). Although *al-karākh* is written with the Arabic definite article, it appears to be a loan of Syriac *kreḵ* (emph. *kerkō*), meaning ‘volume’ or ‘codex’. *Rekno* typically means ‘inflection’ or ‘tone’ (Payne Smith 1903, 542), but the *laḥn al-karākh* gloss might be better rendered ‘mode of the [liturgical] volume’, referring to a particular mode used in a church service. This more specialised definition is linked to the eight-fold *octoechos* modality of medieval church tones (see Werner 1959, 575; also below). In any case, Ibn 'Alī's phrase *laḥn al-karākh* implies that *ne'mtō* and *rekne* relate to musical modes used in liturgy.

⁹ Gottheil notes several manuscript variations for *ne'mtō* and *naghma*. In addition to *'alḥān*, two variants have *naghamāt* for the gloss of *ne'mtō*. Another reads “*ne'mtō* and *rekne*: are *'alḥān* and *naghamāt*” (Gottheil 1908, 75 fns 5–6).

Bar Bahlul's tenth-century Syriac lexicon is more comprehensive than Ibn 'Alī's and contains several more Arabic definitions of *ne'mtō*. His primary gloss for singular *ne'mtō* is *naghama*. For the plural, he quotes a gloss from the ninth-century lexicographer Bar Serosheway: "*'anghām* and *'aṣwāt*." The former term is a plural form of *naghma*, while the latter is the plural of Arabic *ṣawt* 'voice, sound'. Like Ibn 'Alī, Bar Bahlul then translates the phrase *ne'mtō w-rekne*, giving *'alḥān* and *'anghām* (Duval 1901, 1261).¹⁰ In entries on other lexemes, he also uses *ne'mtō* for 'speech sound' or 'sweet' speech (Duval 1901, 973, 1759). These examples align with the Arabic lexicographical tradition, but none of them indicate 'vowel' in Syriac or Arabic.

Interestingly, in addition to his primary gloss of Arabic *naghma* for Syriac *ne'mtō*, Bar Bahlul gives an ostensible synonym in Syriac script: *'ekos*. This word is a loan of the Greek *echos* 'sound, mode', and in Syriac it indicates a 'tone' or 'mode' used in liturgy (Payne Smith 1903, 13). Specifically, it is one mode of the *octoechos*, the eight-fold modality used in the liturgical rites of many Eastern sects of Christianity. As Eric Werner explains:

Today, this is the Byzantine system of eight Church tones, but, originally, it was a liturgical designation of eight individual melodies, each of which was used for one of eight Sundays.... It represents best what is today understood as a musical mode. (Werner 1959, 375; see also, 587–88)

A Syriac hymnbook may thus be called *'okṭoyekos*, referencing an eight-week cycle of modes used in the performance of church

¹⁰ See also *ne'mtō* in the lexicon's entry on *rekno* (Duval 1901, 1903).

music. Another name for such a hymnal is *da-tmōne rekne*, literally 'of the eight tones' (Payne Smith 1903, 13, 542). This term, *octoechos*, originates with the seventh-century Byzantine Hagio-politan rite in Jerusalem, and although the music of the various modes differs between Syrian and Byzantine churches, the idea of an eight-fold modality is common to both (Werner 1959, 376, 382, 386; Jeffery 2001). Probably through association with the term *rekno* 'tone', Bar Bahlul connects *ne'mto* to this modality.

Medieval Arabic musicologists were also aware of this eight-fold modality and its widespread application in multiple musical traditions (see Yusuf 1964; Wright 1966; Avenary 1968, 160–62; E. Neubauer 1998, 1–127). Perhaps the most well-known of these musicologists is the polymath Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. 873). As he writes in his *Risāla fī al-Luḥūn wa-al-Nagham* (*Treatise on Modes and Melody*):

All the traditions belonging to all peoples derive from the eight Byzantine 'modes' (*alḥān*), as we have mentioned. That is because everything hearable comes from one of them. Whether it be a human voice or an animal sound, like the neighing of a horse, the braying of a donkey, the crowing of a rooster, or any [other] type of call belonging to an animal, it can be classified according to which of the eight modes it is, for it cannot exist outside of them. (Yusuf 1964, 26–27; see also German translation of E. Neubauer 1998, 6–7)

It seems that, through this Arabic musicological tradition, knowledge of the *octoechos* also passed to Sa'adya. As we will now see, his reception of this tradition offers a plausible explanation for why he would interpret Hebrew grammar in musicological terms.

3.0. Arabic Musicology in Sa'adya's Interpretation of *Naghma*

The first evidence of eight musical modes in Jewish history may come from the phrase 'on the eighth' ('*al ha-šeminit*) in Pss 6 and 12. Sa'adya certainly thought so, taking the phrase as a reference to an eighth 'mode' (*lahn*) in Levitical temple music (Werner 1959, 377, 379; Avenary 1968, 147 ln. 8, 152, 160–62). His understanding parallels the tradition of the *octoechos* in Eastern churches and aligns with the Arabic reception of an eight-fold modality. In fact, his knowledge of this modality is clearly linked to a passage from al-Kindī's *Al-Risāla fī 'Ajzā' Khabariyat al-Mūsīqā* (*The Treatise on the Precise Information of Music*), which he heavily relies on when discussing musical modes in *Kitāb al-'Amānāt wal-'Itiqādāt* 'The Book of Beliefs and Opinions' (Avenary 1968, 160; Shiloah 2004, 269–75). Both authors lay out eight modes in essentially the same way. However, al-Kindī's text describes 'rhythmic' modes, which are musicologically distinct from the 'tonal' or 'melodic' modes of the *octoechos*. Sa'adya differentiates these two types of mode (see below), but he still mimics the patterns of beats in al-Kindī's rhythms to define the patterns of notes in his own melodies.

Al-Kindī follows a general format as he proceeds through eight rhythmic modes, which he refers to as *'iqā'āt*. For example:

And [the second mode, called] 'the second heavy' (*al-thaqīl al-thānī*), it is three consecutive beats (*naqarāt*), then a 'still' (*sākina*) beat, then a 'moved' (*mutaḥarrika*) beat, then the rhythm restarts. (Shiloah 2004, 272)

...

And [the eighth mode, called] 'the twanging' (*al-hajaz*), is two consecutive beats (*naqratān*) with no time for a beat between them, but between all of the pairs of notes is the time of two notes. (Shiloah 2004, 273)

The musical discussion in *Kitāb al-ʿAmānāt* follows the structure of this text, and Sa'adya records the same musical patterns as those in al-Kindī's *Risāla*, but he alters some details. Most significantly, he comments on the effects that the modes have on the four Galenic humours, ultimately leading to equilibrium in body and soul. In his parallel versions of the above al-Kindī quotations:

The second [mode] is three consecutive 'notes' (*naghamāt*), then one 'still' (*sākina*) [note] and one 'moved' (*mutaḥarrika*) [note]. These [first] two modes stir (*yuḥarrikān*) the force (*quwwa*) of the blood and the temperament of sovereignty and dominion. (my translation of Shiloah 2004, 272, with reference to his translation on 274)

...

The eighth [mode]: its measure is two consecutive notes (*naghamatān*) with no time for a note between them, but between all of the pairs of notes is the time of two notes. These [last] four [modes] all stir the black bile and invoke distinct temperaments in the soul, sometimes towards happiness, other times to sadness. It is the habit of kings to blend [the modes] with each other so that they balance out. Then when they hear [the modes], what stirs in their temperaments is all to the same extent, making their souls suitable for the management of the kingdom. (my translation of Shiloah 2004, 273, with reference to his translation on 275)

The belief that music induces positive or negative changes in the soul was common in ninth- and tenth-century philosophy, with

al-Kindī and others expressing similar sentiments elsewhere (Shiloah 1976, 25, 28, 71–73; 1991). As Shiloah (2004, 277–82) argues, the inclusion of those metaphysical effects coincides with Saʿadya’s intention to produce a work of religious philosophy, rather than a book about music. For him, the goal was to highlight the harmonious effects of the modes, not to explain music theory.

Accordingly, Saʿadya also replaces al-Kindī’s term *naqra* ‘beat’ with *naghma* ‘note’,¹¹ evidently distancing the modes he describes from the physical ‘beat’ of plucking an *ūd*. Moreover, instead of forming *ʾiqāʿāt* ‘rhythmic modes’, the *naghamāt* ‘notes’ in *Kitāb al-ʾAmānāt* combine into *alḥān* (sg *laḥn*) (Shiloah 2004, 272, 280–81).¹² In this case, *laḥn* means ‘tonal’ or ‘melodic’ mode, contrasting al-Kindī’s rhythmic terminology (Werner 1959, 385–86; Avenary 1968, 147, 152). These changes establish a meaning for *naghma* in Saʿadya’s musicological vocabulary: it is a single ‘note’ of a ‘melody’, the smallest unit of sound or silence that can occur in music.

Despite their differences, Saʿadya and al-Kindī both utilise the same pair of concepts when explaining the anatomy of the eight modes: ‘motion’ and ‘stillness’. They communicate these

¹¹ Although not directly related to Saʿadya’s *naghamāt*, a potential association of ‘beats’ with ‘vowels’ would not have been unprecedented in the medieval period. Syriac grammarians sometimes referred to vowels as *nqṣṣṭw* ‘beats’ (sg *nqṣṣṭ*) due to their role in numerating poetic metres (Segal 1953, 7, 54, 171; Kiraz 2012, I:59; Posegay 2021b, 33, 143).

¹² He also uses the alternate plural *luḥūn*.

ideas by saying that each *naghma* or *naqra* may be either *mutaḥarrika* 'moved' or *sākina* 'still'. A 'moved' *naghma* is a discrete audible note in a melody, whereas a 'still' *naghma* is a unit of silence, a 'rest' with the same duration as a note. This 'moving' and 'still' language matches terminology that Arabic and Hebrew (and Syriac) grammarians used to describe vocalisation in the tenth century (Versteegh 2011; Posegay 2021b, 55–85). That is, a 'vocalised' consonant is 'moved' (*mutaḥarrik*), while an 'unvocalised' consonant is 'still' (*sākin*).

This connection was not lost on medieval musicologists. In Iraq around the tenth century, a group of philosophers known as the 'Ikhwān al-Ṣafā¹³ wrote in their *Epistle on Music*:

Music consists of 'alḥān 'melodies', melody consists of *naghamāt* 'notes', and notes consist of *naqarāt* 'beats' and 'iqā'āt 'rhythms'. All of these are based on *ḥarakāt* 'movements' and *sukūn* 'stillness'. Equally, poems consist of hemistiches, hemistiches are composed of *mafā'il* 'feet', and feet consist of *asbāb*, *awtād*, and *fawāṣil*.¹⁴ All of these are based on *mutaḥarrik* 'moved' and *sākin* 'motionless' letters, as we explained in the *Epistle on Prosody*. Likewise, all sayings consist of *kalimāt* 'words', words [consist] of nouns, verbs, and particles, and all of them consist of moved and motionless letters, as we explained in the *Epistle on Language*. (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā 1957, I:196–97)¹⁵

¹³ 'Brethren of Purity'; see Netton (2002).

¹⁴ On these three units of feet, which are tangential to our discussion, see Lane (1863, 1285, 2407, 2917).

¹⁵ See also translation of Shiloah (1976, 26).

The 'Ikhwān explain that the components of music are akin to the components of prosody and language, because all three fields depend on the principle of 'movement' and 'stillness'. In language, words consist of 'moved' and 'motionless' letters, which makes them analogous to the *'alḥān* 'melodies' and other musical elements. A similar explanation appears in al-Farābī's (d. 951) *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā al-Kabīr* (*The Big Book of Music*), directly linking *laḥn* and *nagham* to the letters of spoken language:

The noun *al-laḥn* indicates a group of various 'notes' (*nagham*) arranged in a defined order. It may also indicate a group of notes composed in a defined harmony, with which the letters that combine into organised spoken utterances are connected, denoting meaning in accordance with general usage. (al-Farabi 1967, 47; see also 16)¹⁶

Sa'adya undoubtedly drew the same comparison between the 'notes' (*naghamāt*) of 'melodies' (*alḥān*) and the 'moved' (*mutaḥarrik*)—that is, 'vocalised'—letters of Hebrew.

This association suggests that Sa'adya's *naghma* 'vowel' definition in *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham* is the result of musicological thinking in his linguistic analysis of Hebrew speech. The choice to refer to vowels as *naghamāt* thus serves two purposes for him. First, by using 'notes' instead of the more common 'kings' (*mulūk*), 'symbols' (*simanim*), or 'movements' (*ḥarakāt*), he sets up the central conceit of *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham*, which is to arrange the Hebrew vowels on an ascending phonetic 'scale' (Skoss 1952; Dotan 2007, 623–24). This scale resembles the notes of a

¹⁶ See Werner (1959, 387).

musical octave, with each of the seven Tiberian vowels occupying a discrete upward step.¹⁷ Second, by portraying the vowels as musical components, Sa'adya imbues spoken Hebrew language with the metaphysical effects of melody. As stated in *Kitāb al-'Amānāt* (above), such effects balance the humours and bring harmony to the soul.

This metaphysical implication is consistent with Sa'adya's comments elsewhere regarding the creative power of Hebrew. Most notably, it correlates with his description of the creation of the world in his *Commentary on Sefer Yešira*. The original Hebrew of *Sefer Yešira* already connects each of the letters to aspects of creation (Hayman 2004, 49–51), but Sa'adya takes it a step further, explaining: “He [God] sent out (ʿakhraja) creation (*takwīn*) with an utterance (*lafza*) of command, and accordingly its meaning was ‘create’” (Lambert 1891, 18, lns 7–8). The verb ʿakhraja ‘he sent out’ here is a play on words, as it can also indicate the ‘sending out’ or ‘pronunciation’ of speech (see Posegay 2021b, 114 fn. 63). Sa'adya's statement may thus be read: “He [God] pronounced creation.” Sa'adya further emphasises God's spoken Hebrew with the word *lafza* ‘utterance’, a technical linguistic term that designates meaningful speech (Lane 1863, 2667).

¹⁷ On the relationship between the octave and the eight modes, see Werner (1959, 377, 382, 385) and Gombosi (1938). The numeration of seven vowels in Sa'adya's scale corresponds to the seven different notes in an octave. The ‘eighth’ note of an octave is the same as the first, restarting the scale at a higher or lower pitch; cf. *The Sound of Music*, “and that brings us back to doe” (Wise 1965).

There is one more possible allusion in Sa'adya's use of *naghamāt* that, while I have not found explicit evidence to support it, still admits an uncanny coincidence. Throughout the history of the *octoechos*, musicologists stressed the metaphysical importance of eight as a 'perfect' number, symbolically relating the eight modes to aspects of the universe. As Werner notes, the 'Ikhwān al-Ṣafā explain this symbolism:

Eight is the perfect number for music and astronomy; there are eight stations of the moon, five planets plus sun, moon, and earth, eight modes of music corresponding to the eight moods of nature: hot-wet, cold-dry, cold-wet, and hot-dry. (trans. Werner 1959, 381; from edition of Dieterici 1886, 128–31)

This understanding of the number eight is temporally close to Sa'adya, but a much earlier concept may be more relevant: the late antique Gnostic *Ogdoas* (or *Ogdoad*). The *Ogdoas* was a divine cosmological entity or demiurge representing an 'eighth' sphere that encompassed the seven heavens. The heavens and the *Ogdoas* thus formed a '7 + 1' system that late antique thinkers related to music, notably mirroring the 7 + 1 notes of an octave and the eight-fold modality (see Werner 1959, 380–82; Avenary 1968, 160).

This numeration was also significant to the famous conception of the 'Gnostic vowels', and this principle brings us back to

Sa'adya. As the Greco-Egyptian Gnostic magical text known as the *Eighth Book of Moses* reads:¹⁸

Stored up in it is the Omnipotent Name, which is the *Ogdoas*, God, who creates and administrates everything.... Only by oracle may the Great Name be invoked, the *Ogdoas*.... For without Him nothing can be accomplished; keep secret, O disciple, the eight symbolic vowels of the Great Name. (trans. Werner 1959, 380–81; see also Dieterich 1891, 194)

These 'symbolic vowels' that invoke the *Ogdoas* are ultimately based on the seven Greek vowels. In early Christian music theory, they also occur as seven or eight ('7 + 1') vowels that represent notes or modes (Werner 1959, 381). When Sa'adya refers to the Tiberian vowels as 'notes' (*naghamāt*), he appears to invoke the same symbolism. We might then ask: was Sa'adya intentionally alluding to a Gnostic cosmological concept in *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham*? At the very least, the idea that the vowels have metaphysical importance derived from the creative power of God's speech would not be out of place next to Sa'adya's account of the Hebrew alphabet in his *Commentary on Sefer Yešira*.

We will leave this question with two final quotations from the 'Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's *Epistle on Music* that reflect a strand of Neoplatonic thought prevalent in Sa'adya's time (see Netton 2002). In their chapter titled *Li-Ḥarakāt al-'Aflāk Naghamāt ka-Naghamāt*

¹⁸ The sole extant manuscript of this book was copied around 350 CE, although the text itself was likely composed a century or two earlier (Klutz 2013).

al-ʿĪdān (The Movements of the Spheres Have Notes Like the Notes of Ouds), they write:

It is clear from what we have mentioned that the ‘movements’ (*ḥarakāt*) of the ‘heavenly spheres’ (*ʿaflāk*) and planets have nice, sweet ‘notes’ (*naghamāt*) and ‘melodies’ (*ʿalhān*) that gladden the souls of their people. [It is also clear] that those notes and melodies remind earthly souls that there is delight in the world of spirits, which is above the spheres, and its essence is more sublime than the essence of the world of the spheres. (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā 1957, I:207; see also 225)

Saʿadya could well have read this text, and the ʾIkhwan’s description of the heavenly spheres is not dissimilar to the Gnostic cosmology of the *Ogdoas*. Additionally, the close association—almost conflation—of the ‘movements’ (*ḥarakāt*) of the spheres with the ‘notes’ (*naghamāt*) that they emit presents a clear comparison for the equivalence of *naghamāt* and *ḥarakāt* ‘vowels’ in Saʿadya’s linguistic writings. The final section of the ʾIkhwān’s epistle, titled *Talawwun Taʿthīrāt al-ʿAnghām (Variation in the Effects of Notes)*, then reads:

Know, my brother... that the effects a musician’s ‘notes’ (*naghamāt*) have on the souls of listeners are of various types.... All this depends on [the souls’] stations in ‘Gnosticism’ (*al-maʿārif*) and on their established preferences in beauty. (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā 1957, I:240)

Shiloah (1976, 71 fn. 72) notes that this chapter focuses on music theory as it relates to mysticism, especially Sufism, and so argues that the word *maʿārif* (lit. ‘knowledges’) here refers to Gnosticism. These two passages from the *Epistle on Music* suggest it is not impossible that Saʿadya knew about Gnostic vowels and alluded to

them with the term *naghamāt*, though whether that is actually the case remains unresolved.

4.0. Conclusion

Up to the tenth century, *naghma* and its cognates were primarily acoustic terms for Middle Eastern Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Depending on context, they could refer to 'note', 'tone', or 'sound', among many other definitions, but not 'vowel'. Sa'adya Gaon was aware of these musical meanings, but his writings reveal a new understanding of *naghma* that conflates musical 'notes' with what are more often called *ḥarakāt* 'movements, vowels'. When he refers to the vowels as *naghamāt* 'notes' in *Al-Qawl fī al-Nagham*, not only would Jewish readers have understood a deliberate connection to cantillation, but any medieval reader familiar with musicology would have associated his Hebrew vowel scale with the notes of an octave and the eight-fold modality of the *octoechos*. These musical associations would, in turn, have had metaphysical implications, connecting the Hebrew language to melodic properties that were thought to govern the well-being of the soul. It is these connections that most likely motivated Sa'adya to adopt the term *naghma* for 'vowel' even when more common alternatives existed. His decision laid the groundwork for other medieval Judaeo-Arabic authors to use the term in the same way, whether or not they understood his original motivation.

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“YOU SHALL NOT BOIL A KID IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK” IN SA’ADYA GAON’S TRANSLATION OF THE PENTATEUCH*

Tamar Zewi

The prohibition “You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk” appears three times in the Pentateuch, twice in Exodus in the same context and once in Deuteronomy in a different context:

רֵאשִׁית בְּבוּרֵי אֲדָמָתְךָ תָּבִיא בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תִבְשֹׁל גְּדִי בְחֶלֶב אִמּוֹ:
‘The choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.’ (Exod. 23.19; 34.26)¹

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¹ English translations of biblical verses cited in this article are according to the *JPS Tanakh*.

לֹא תֹאכְלוּ כָל־נֶבֶלָה לִגְר אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעְרֵיךָ תִּתְנֶנָּה וְאָכְלָהּ אִו מִכֹּר לְנִכְרִי כִי
עִם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תִבְשֹׁל גְּדִי בְחֶלֶב אִמּוֹ:

‘You shall not eat anything that has died a natural death; give it to the stranger in your community to eat, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people consecrated to the LORD your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.’ (Deut. 14.21)

As is well known, this prohibition was broadly interpreted in Jewish rabbinic *halakha* as forbidding the cooking and consumption of any permissible meat or poultry in milk of any kind, as well as deriving any benefit from it. Accordingly, translation reflecting this expanded interpretation is found in many Jewish rabbinic Bible translations and commentaries, and is also anticipated in Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations and commentaries, first among them the famous groundbreaking Judaeo-Arabic Bible translation of Sa’adya Gaon (882–942).

Sa’adya’s translation, according to his own testimony in its introduction, was extracted at a later stage by Sa’adya himself from a longer commentary, and circulated independently in a slightly edited form. It was distributed in both Hebrew and Arabic characters, the former used by rabbinic and Karaite Jewish communities, and the latter probably also used by some Karaite Jewish communities, while spreading further to select non-Jewish Christian and Samaritan communities.²

² For the significance of Sa’adya’s translation of the Pentateuch, the primary sources in which it was preserved in part or in full, its transmission in Hebrew and Arabic characters, and the different communities which it reached and who used it, see Zucker (1959); Blau (1981, 38–

This article investigates the rendering of the prohibition לֹא תִבְשֹׁל גֵּדִי בְחֵלֶב אִמּוֹ 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk' in major early manuscripts of Sa'adya Gaon's translation of the Pentateuch in Hebrew characters and in Geniza fragments of such manuscripts. These include the most important early manuscript of Sa'adya's Pentateuch translation, MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1, copied around 1009–1010,³ and several early Geniza fragments that show some interesting variations. The translation of the prohibition in these sources is compared with that in MSS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395–396, copied in the 1449,⁴ with the Derenbourg Edition, and with a number of other printed editions of assorted transmission traditions.

41); Polliack (1997, 10–13, 77–90; 1998, 600–5; 1999, 112–15); Steiner (2010); Schlossberg (2011); Griffith (2013, 162–70); Ben-Shammai (2015); Vollandt (2015, 67–70, 80–84); and Zewi (2015, 25–40; 118–53; 179–82; 2016). Sa'adya Gaon also translated several other biblical books into Judaeo-Arabic.

³ For the importance of this manuscript, see Schlossberg (2011, 138–40); Blau (2017). Shmuel ben Ya'akov (=Samuel ben Jacob), mentioned in the manuscript's colophon, is the copyist responsible for MS St Petersburg, RNL Yevr. I B 19a (widely known as Codex Leningrad), which serves as the base manuscript for many critical editions of the Bible: *BHK* (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*³); *BHS* (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*); *BHL* (*Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* by Aron Dotan); *BHQ* (*Biblia Hebraica Quinta*). See further details of his work, according to Cairo Geniza sources, in Vollandt (2009); Outhwaite (2016; 2018, 320); Friedman (2018, 98–107); and Zewi (2021).

⁴ For the importance of this manuscript, see Ben-Shammai (2015, 276).

1.0. Editions

In his study of Sa'adya Gaon's translation of Genesis, Blau (2019, 12–13) points out that Sa'adya translated the prohibition לֹא-תִבְשֹׁל 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk' in Exod. 23.19 as ולא תטבך לחמא בלבן 'You shall not boil meat in milk', adapting it, as had Onqelos, to Jewish rabbinic *halakha*. Already Zucker (1959, 358), however, indicates that there is variation in Sa'adya's translation of the three verses expressing this prohibition, although all reflect the interpretation of Jewish rabbinic *halakha*: Exod. 23.19 is translated as לא תאכל לחמא מע לבן 'You shall not eat meat with milk', whereas Exod. 34.26 and Deut. 14.21 are rendered as לא תטבך לחמא מע לבן 'You shall not boil meat with milk'. Polliack (1997, 85–86, 88, 178; 2013, 131) agrees that Sa'adya's translation of the prohibition conforms to Onqelos and Jewish rabbinic *halakha*, while citing the Derenbourg Edition version for Exod. 23.19 לא תאכל לחמא בלבן 'You shall not eat meat in milk'. This translation is similar to that to which Zucker refers for this verse, albeit with a different preposition בלבן 'in milk' in place of Zucker's מע לבן 'with milk'. The Onqelos Aramaic translation of the prohibition is the same in each of its appearances in the Pentateuch, לא תיכלין בסר בחלב 'You shall not eat meat in milk' (cited from Sperber 1959). This is the translation followed in Sa'adya's version, with the non-literal translation of תִּבְשֹׁל 'cook, boil' with תאכל 'eat', although his other translation uses the Arabic verb תטבך 'cook, boil', the literal rendering of Hebrew תִּבְשֹׁל.

The Derenbourg Edition, which is based on a Yemenite manuscript owned by David Ha-Cohen and on the Constantinople and London Polyglots,⁵ offers three versions of the prohibition:

בִּלְבֵן תֹּאכַל לֶחֱמָא בִּלְבֵן 'You shall not eat meat in milk.' (Exod. 23.19)

בִּלְבֵן תֹּאכַל לֶחֱמָא מֵע לְבֵן 'You shall not eat meat with milk.' (Exod. 34.26)⁶

לֹא תִטְבֵּךְ לֶחֱמָא בִּלְבֵן 'You shall not boil meat in milk.' (Deut. 14.21)

Only in the third of these is the Hebrew verb *תִּבְשַׁל* 'cook, boil' literally translated with *תִּטְבֵּךְ*, whose meaning is the same. In the first two instances, it is replaced with *תֹּאכַל* 'eat'. Qafih (1963, 69–70, fns 8 and 11, 142) identified these two verbs in other sources for Sa'adya's translation of the Pentateuch, most of them Yemenite manuscripts. Those that he found for Exod. 34.26 and Deut. 14.21 are identical to those cited above from the Derenbourg Edition, but he found the verb *תִּטְבֵּךְ* not only in Deut. 14.21, but also in the translation of the prohibition in Exod.

⁵ As noted in the French foreword to the Derenbourg Edition (vi) and its Hebrew foreword (vii). Despite Derenbourg's dependence on the London Polyglot, his translation of the prohibition *לֹא-תִבְשַׁל גִּדִּי בְחֵלֶב אִמּוֹ* 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk' is not identical to that in the London Polyglot (see more below).

⁶ Another version cited in a footnote in the Derenbourg Edition, *לֹא תִטְבֵּךְ* 'You shall not boil', is accompanied by a remark from Derenbourg on the difference between prohibiting cooking and prohibiting eating (133 fn. 1). This alternative version is used in the translation of Deut. 24.21 in the Derenbourg Edition.

23.19.⁷ Whatever Sa'adya's original translations for each occurrence of the prohibition in the Pentateuch, these two renderings of the verb תִּבְשֹׁל 'cook, boil' echo the ban on both eating and cooking, that is, two of the three prohibitions included in the rabbinic halachic interpretation, as in the Babylonian Talmud:

לא תבשל גדי בחלב אמו ג' פעמים אחד לאיסור אכילה ואחד לאיסור
הנאה ואחד לאיסור בשול

“‘You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk’” appears three times: once as a prohibition against eating it, once as a prohibition against benefitting from it, and once as a prohibition against cooking it.’ (b. Hullin, 115b)

Moreover, the translation of ‘a kid in its mother’s milk’ is non-literal in all three renditions, and is substituted by an interpretive translation reflecting Onqelos and the Jewish rabbinic *halakha*: לחמא ב-/מע לבן ‘meat in/with milk’. Furthermore, the translation of תִּבְשֹׁל ‘cook, boil’ with תֹּאכַל ‘eat’ is also non-literal, conforming to Sa'adya's exegetical and translational method, as explained in the introduction to his own interpretation of Genesis (Zucker 1984, 18, 192 [Hebrew translation]).

The translations of Exod. 23.19 and 34.26 in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 have unfortunately been lost, but they are preserved in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395, where they show slight variation, using בלבן ‘in milk’ twice, as follows:

‘You shall not eat meat in milk’ (Exod. 23.19).

⁷ This version is also found in Taj A and Taj B, as well as in the Derenbourg Edition (133 fn. 1), as indicated in the previous footnote.

ולא תאכל לחמא בלבן 'You shall not eat meat in milk' (Exod. 34.26).

The way the prohibition is translated in the latter two renditions is attested in several early Geniza fragments of Sa'adya Gaon's short translation.

Exod. 23.19 is found on five Geniza fragments:

- (1) MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 3327, comprising 30 parchment leaves, and dated approximately to the late eleventh/early twelfth century—the biblical texts it preserves include Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 21.1–37; 22.1–30; 23.1–20, 29–33; 24.1–18; 25.32–36; 37.23–29; 38.1–20; Num. 32.9–40; and Deut. 21.17–23; 22.1–29; 23.1–21; 24.3–22; 25.1–19. Sa'adya's rendering of the prohibition in this fragment is ולא תאכל לחם בלבן 'You shall not eat meat in milk'. The verb is תאכל 'eat', and the prepositional phrase is בלבן 'in milk'; the noun לחם 'meat' lacks any indication of the accusative case, represented in Classical Arabic by a final *'alef* added to an indefinite noun.⁸ This version resembles that found in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395, cited above.
- (2) MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 1753, comprising 34 paper leaves—probably to be attributed based on the handwriting to the thirteenth-century scribe Shlomo ben Shmuel, it is likely that this is when it was copied. The biblical texts it preserves primarily includes

⁸ On the inconsistency in indicating the accusative case with *'alef* suffixed to indefinite nouns in Judaeo-Arabic, see Blau (1980, 150–52).

Sa'adya's short translation of several segments from Gen. 7–18; 32–44; and Exod. 3–5; 9–19; 23–30; 39, and it is also embedded with words and expressions taken from Sa'adya's exegesis or typical of Karaite Bible translations.⁹ The rendering of the prohibition in this Geniza fragment is undoubtedly Sa'adya's: **וְלֹא תִטְבֹּךְ אֶלְלֶחֶם מֵעַ אֶלְלֶבָן** 'You shall not boil meat with milk'. The verb is **תִּטְבֹּךְ** 'cook, boil', similar to the Yemenite tradition cited above, whereas the preposition is **מֵעַ** 'with', as in the version of the Derenbourg Edition for Exod. 34.26. The noun **אֶלְלֶחֶם** 'meat' appears in this version with the definite article **אֶל**, and cannot, therefore, take a final accusative 'alef.

- (3) MS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar.27.105, comprising seven parchment leaves and dating approximately from the eleventh–twelfth centuries—the biblical texts it preserves include Sa'adya's translation of Exod. 23.5–24.6; and Num. 23.21–26.15; 28.29–30.13; 31.15–32.31. The prohibition is rendered there as **וְלֹא תֹאכַל לֶחֶם בִּלְבָן** 'You shall not eat meat in milk'. The verb is **תֹּאכַל** 'eat', the word **לֶחֶם** 'meat' lacks the Classical Arabic final accusative 'alef, and the prepositional phrase is **בִּלְבָן** 'in milk', as in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395.
- (4) MS Cambridge CUL T-S NS 38.59, comprising a single paper leaf and dating approximately to the eleventh–

⁹ For full publication of this Geniza fragment and its details, see Zewi (2022).

twelfth centuries—it includes Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 23.16–21, 27–29,¹⁰ with the prohibition *וְלֹא תֹאכַל לֶחֶם בְּלֶבֶן* 'You shall not eat meat in milk'. A final *'alef* on *לֶחֶם* 'meat' indicates the accusative case; the prepositional phrase is *בְּלֶבֶן* 'in milk', as in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395.

- (5) MS Cambridge CUL T-S NS 221.16, comprising a single paper leaf, also dating approximately to the eleventh–twelfth centuries—it includes Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 23.16–32; 24.3–17, with only the word *לֶבֶן* 'milk' remaining, visible as the last word of the verse's translation. It is thus clear that it never read *לֶבֶן אִמָּה* 'it's mother's milk', as in the versions cited and in Jewish rabbinic *halakha*.

Exod. 34.26 is found in three Geniza fragments:

- (1) MS Budapest MTA 368, comprising 19 paper leaves, dating approximately from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries—it includes Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 29.28–36.26. The prohibition is rendered here as *וְלֹא תֹאכַל לֶחֶם בְּלֶבֶן* 'You shall not eat meat in milk'. The word

¹⁰ This Geniza fragment most probably joins MSS Cambridge CUL T-S NS 33.38 (remnants of Sa'adya's translation of Exod. 23.11–15, 22–26), T-S NS 33.92 (Sa'adya's translation of Exod. 21.3–8, 18–22), TS NS 34.71 (complementary remnants of Sa'adya's translation of Exod. 23.11–15, 22–26), and T-S NS 285.60 (Sa'adya's translation of Gen. 44.25–45.9).

לחם 'meat' lacks the accusative final *'alef*. The prepositional phrase is בלבן 'in milk', as in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395.

- (2) MS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar.1a.105, comprising a single parchment leaf and dating approximately to the late eleventh/early twelfth century—it includes Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 34.19–35.22.¹¹ Here Sa'adya's translation is ולא תאכל לחמא מע לבן. The word לחמא 'meat' has the final accusative *'alef*. The prepositional phrase is מע לבן 'with milk', as in the Derenbourg Edition.
- (3) MS Cambridge CUL Misc.6.10, comprising a single paper leaf, dating approximately to the twelfth century. It includes Sa'adya's short translation of Exod. 34.23–32. Sa'adya's translation of the prohibition in it is ולא תאכל לחם בלבן. The word לחם 'meat' lacks final accusative *'alef*, and the prepositional phrase is again בלבן 'in milk', as in MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395.

However, most interesting is the unequivocal literal rendering of this prohibition in Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 14.21, according to both MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 and MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396:

וְלֹא תִטְבֵּךְ גִּדִּיא¹² בִּלְבָן אִמּוֹה 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.' (Deut. 14.21)

¹¹ This Geniza fragment most probably joins MS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar.1a.110 (Sa'adya's translation of Exod. 10.10–11.10; Lev. 22.18–23.15).

¹² In Ms. Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396: גִּדִּיא, with the diacritic.

An identical or nearly identical translation of the prohibition of this verse is found in three more Geniza fragments:

- (1) MS New York JTS ENA 2445.5–11, comprising seven paper leaves and dating approximately to the twelfth–thirteenth centuries—this Geniza fragment includes Sa'adya's short translation of Deut. 12.28–19.14.¹³ Sa'adya's rendering of the prohibition here is the same as in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 and MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396.
- (2) MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 556, comprising 23 paper leaves, and probably, according to the handwriting, copied by Shlomo ben Shmuel in the thirteenth century—it includes Sa'adya's short translation of Num. 36.2–13 and Deut. 1.1–4.16; 14.12–22.14; 24.4–29.25.¹⁴

¹³ Other fragments probably by the same copyist, with some perhaps belonging to a single manuscript, are MSS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar. 25.42 (Sa'adya's translation of Prov. 25.11–25), TS NS 285.133 (Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 24.7–25.7), MSS London BL OR 9772A.1–6 (Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 2.31–4.26), BL OR 1080.2.71 (Sa'adya's translation of Prov. 19.13–27), MSS New York JTS ENA 3245.2–3 (Sa'adya's translation of Gen. 14.9–24; 15.1–5), and ENA 3639.6–7 (Sa'adya's translation of Gen. 4.13–26; 5.1–10).

¹⁴ Other fragments copied by Shlomo ben Shmuel, according to the handwriting, are MS Budapest MTA 204.3 (Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 32.4–33.19) and MSS St Petersburg Yevr.-Arab. I 1753, mentioned above, Yevr. II C 543 (Sa'adya's translation of Gen. 20.3–21.10; 23.2–24.5), and Yevr.-Arab. I 1507 (Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 32.2–34.12). MS St Petersburg Yevr.-Arab. I 1753 has no translation of Deut. 14.21, but, as stated, its translation of the prohibition in Exod. 23.19

The prohibition is again rendered as in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 and MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396.

- (3) MS Paris AIU II.A.125, comprising three paper leaves, dating approximately to the eleventh–twelfth centuries—it includes Saadya’s short translation of Deut. 14.7–29; 15.1–23.¹⁵ The translation of the prohibition here is virtually the same as those above: ולא גדי [...] בלבן אמה ‘You shall not... a kid in its mother’s milk’. The verb is not preserved in this translation, and the word גדי ‘a kid’ lacks the accusative final *’alef*, but the phrase most significant to this discussion, גדי בלבן אמה, translates literally as ‘kid in its mother’s milk’, as in the renderings above.

The translation of another Geniza fragment preserving this prohibition, MS London BL OR 12318.4, is, however, different. This fragment includes Sa’adya’s short translation of Deut. 13.14–19 and 14.1–25 on a single parchment leaf. According to the handwriting and the full representation of diacritics, it should probably be dated to a later period than the fragments considered

accords with the Rabbinic halakhic interpretation and uses the verb תטבח, as in the Yemenite version.

¹⁵ Additional fragments probably copied by Shlomo ben Shmuel and belonging to a single manuscript are MS Budapest MTA 204.2 (Sa’adya’s translation of Deut. 21.7–22.3; 26.15–27.13), MSS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar. 22.57 (Gen. 44.15–45.3), T-S Ar. 22.69 (Sa’adya’s translation of Num. 26.29–63; 31.36–32.7), T-S Ar. 25.130 (Sa’adya’s translation of Gen. 19.3–35), Moss. III.192 (Sa’adya’s translation of Lev. 16.21–17.5), and MS New York JTS ENA 3094.12–13 (Sa’adya’s translation of Deut. 22.3–24; 26.2–15).

above.¹⁶ The version it gives is ולא תטבך' לחמא בלבן 'You shall not boil meat in milk,' which conforms to the Jewish rabbinic *halakha* and to the way it is rendered in the Derenbourg Edition and Yemenite manuscripts and their printed editions.

2.0. Discussion

All this suggests gradual development of the version of this prohibition in Sa'adya's translation over the years. It shows evolution from an entirely literal rendering to one that conforms to Jewish rabbinic halakhic interpretation.

Especially relevant is comparison between Sa'adya's translations of the prohibition and those of medieval Karaite Bible translations in Judaeo-Arabic. The Karaites often took biblical instructions literally, rejecting later Jewish rabbinic halakhic interpretations. Accordingly, the literal rendering of the tenth- and eleventh-century Karaites Yefet ben Eli and Yeshua ben Yehuda of the three occurrences of the prohibition appearing as לא תנצ'ג' 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk' comes as no surprise (Polliack 1997, 178; Bareket 2003, 243).¹⁷ What

¹⁶ MS London BL OR 12318.3 (Sa'adya's translation of Deut. 12.21–31; 13.1–13) joins this fragment. In early Geniza fragments of Sa'adya's Bible translation, dated approximately to the late eleventh–thirteenth centuries, the 'צ and 'ט are usually the only diacriticised letters, occasionally also 'ג for either ج or غ. Full diacritic marking, including 'ת, 'ד, and 'כ, is typical of later Geniza fragments of Sa'adya's Bible translation.

¹⁷ On Anan ben David's interpretation of the Hebrew word מגדים as ראשית בכורי אדמתך 'The choice first fruits of your soil' (Exod. 23.19; 34.26), see Harkavy (1903, 151–52).

should surprise us is the literal translation in Deut. 14.21 by the Jewish rabbinic scholar Sa'adya Gaon, considering his commitment to Jewish rabbinic halakhic interpretation. Be that as it may, these literal translations are not identical, as the Karaite scholars selected the Arabic verb *תנצ'ג* to render the Hebrew verb *תבשל* 'cook, boil', whereas Sa'adya used the Arabic verb *תטבד*.¹⁸

Although it is tempting to surmise that the literal translation of the prohibition in Deut. 14.21 in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 was not by Sa'adya's hand, but is perhaps related to Karaite translations, this seems not to be the case. The lexical difference between this literal Sa'adyan translation and that of the Karaites, together with the literal renderings in other early Sa'adyan manuscripts that show no connection to Karaite trans-

¹⁸ A version similar to that found for the prohibition in this verse in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 and MSS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395–396 appears in each mention of the prohibition in the Samaritan version of Sa'adya's translation of the Pentateuch and in the other Arabic versions of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Predictably, the Samaritan Arabic translation of this prohibition is always literal, but note that the verb used is *תטבד* 'cook, boil', similar to Sa'adya's translation, from which it probably reached the Samaritan Arabic versions (Shehadeh 1989, 1:368–69, 418–19; 2002, 2:492–93; Zewi 2015, 334, 347, 453, 486). Sa'adya's translation in Arabic characters, displayed in the London Polyglot, based on the Coptic manuscript, MS Paris BnF Ar. 1, also shows literal translations of all appearances of the prohibition, but, interestingly, the verb in Exod. 23.19 and Deut. 14.21 is *تطبخ* as in Sa'adya's translation, whereas in Exod. 34.26 it is *تنضج*, as in the Karaite translations. The latter version is not mentioned in the Derenbourg Edition, although one of its sources was the London Polyglot.

lations, indicate that the literal version in Deut. 14.21 was selected by Sa'adya himself. This literal version, preserved in MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1, MSS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396, and three early Geniza fragments, was well-established in Sa'adya's translation of the Pentateuch at least up to the fifteenth century and only then was replaced by the non-literal translation found in other later Sa'adyan versions, in harmony with the non-literal translations of Exod. 23.19 and 34.26, which adhere to the Jewish rabbinic halakhic interpretation.

3.0. Conclusion

The translation of the prohibition *לֹא-תִבְשֹׁל גְּדִי בְחֵלְבֵי אִמּוֹ* 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk' in Sa'adya's translation of the Pentateuch is inconsistent. Key early sources for this translation testify to a major difference between its translation in Exod. 23.19 and 34.26, on the one hand, and that in Deut. 14.21, on the other. The former is a non-literal interpretive translation, conforming to Jewish rabbinic *halakha*, whereas the latter is literal, and was adapted to Jewish rabbinic *halakha* only at a later stage. There was probably a development in Sa'adyan sources of the translation of the prohibition in Deut. 14.21, moving from literal to non-literal rabbinic interpretive translation similar to Sa'adya's translation of the prohibition in Exod. 23.19 and 34.26. This is another example which reflects the unique and independent character of Sa'adya's Bible translation, described by Blau (2019, טז) as *התרגום האישי והחופשי ביותר* 'the most personal and free translation' known to him.

4.0. Appendix

The three Tables display the different Arabic translations of the three biblical appearances of the prohibition לֹא־תִבְשֹׁל גִּדִּי בַחֲלֵב אִמּוֹ ‘You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk’ discussed in this article.

Table 1: Exod. 23.19

Source	Translation
Sources checked by Zucker (1959, 358)	לא תאכל לחמא מע לבן
The Derenbourg Edition	ולא תאכל לחמא בלבן
Yemenite manuscripts mainly checked by Qafih (1963, 69), Taj A and Taj B	Given by Qafih in Hebrew translation: לא תבשל, ולא תבשל בשר בחלב
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1	Not preserved
MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395	ולא תאכל לחם בלבן
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 3327	ולא תאכל לחם בלבן
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr.-Arab. I 1753	ולא תטבך אללחם מע אללבן
MS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar.27.105	ולא תאכל לחם בלבן
MS Cambridge CUL T-S NS 38.59	ולא תאכל לחמא בלבן
MS Cambridge CUL T-S NS 221.16	לבן...
Yefet ben Eli and Yeshua ben Yehuda (Polliack 1997, 178)	לא תנצ'ג' אלג'די בלבן אמה

Table 2: Exod. 34.26

Source	Translation
Sources checked by Zucker (1959, 358)	לא תטבך' לחמא מע לבן
The Derenbourg Edition	ולא תאכל לחמא מע לבן
Yemenite manuscripts mainly checked by Qafih (1963, 70 and fn. 11), Taj A and Taj B	Given by Qafih in Hebrew translation: לא תבשל, ולא תאכל בשר בחלב
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1	Not preserved
MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 395	ולא תאכל לחמא בלבן
MS Budapest MTA 368	ולא תאכל לחם בלבן
MS Cambridge CUL T-S Ar.1a.105	ולא תאכל לחמא מע לבן

MS Cambridge CUL Misc.6.10	ולא תאכל לחם בלבן
Yefet ben Eli and Yeshua ben Yehuda	לא תנצ'ג' אלג'די בלבן אמה
(Polliack 1997, 178)	

Table 3: Deut. 14.21

Source	Translation
Sources checked by Zucker (1959, 358)	לא תטבך' לחמא מע לבן
The Derenbourg Edition	לא תטבך' לחמא בלבן
Yemenite manuscripts mainly	Given by Qafih in Hebrew translation:
checked by Qafih (1963, 142), Taj A and Taj B	
	לא תבשל, לא תבשל בשר בחלב
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1	ולא תטבך גדיא בלבן אמה
MS Oxford Bodl. Poc. 396	ולא תטבך ג'דיא בלבן אמה
MS New York JTS ENA 2445.5–11	ולא תטבך גדיא בלבן אמה
MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 556	ולא תטבך גדיא בלבן אמה
MS Paris AIU: II.A.125	ולא [...] גדי בלבן אמה
MS London BL OR 12318.3–4	ולא תטבך' לחמא בלבן
Yefet ben Eli and Yeshua ben Yehuda	לא תנצ'ג' אלג'די בלבן אמה
(Polliack 1997, 178)	

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JUDAEO-ARABIC TRANSLATIONS FROM THE BIBLE TO ROBINSON CRUSOE: CENTRE VERSUS PERIPHERY*

Ofra Tirosh-Becker

The translation of prominent Hebrew texts into a local Jewish language, whether Yiddish, Ladino, Judaeo-Arabic, Judaeo-Italian, or any other variety, is a trait shared by Jewish communities around the globe. These translations were essential to prepare the younger generation for participating in Jewish communal life and were invaluable in making Jewish tradition and teachings accessible throughout the community. The corpus of translated texts was typically shared among many communities and encompassed translations of the Torah and a few additional biblical books (such as Psalms and the scrolls of Ruth and Esther), the Passover *Haggada*, the moral teachings of the Mishna, and *piyyut Mi Khamokha* by Rabbi Judah Halevi. Beyond this basic corpus, some communities extended their translation corpus to include additional religious texts, such as translations of liturgical poems known as *hosha'not* and *seliḥot*. Some may have reflected local translation traditions, possibly stemming from earlier common

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translations, while others resulted from the initiative of individual rabbis, who produced *de novo* translations.

The community's translation corpus was orally transmitted through the generations from father to son and from teacher to disciple. With time, some of these translations were preserved in manuscripts and some appeared in printed books, while others remained only in the memory of the community's elders. Fortunately, a few of these oral traditions were recorded by researchers, keenly aware that these traditions were fated to fall into oblivion, as the younger generations no longer speak these languages.

The present paper discusses Judaeo-Arabic translations in North Africa from the fifteenth century through the early twentieth century. Following a review of earlier Judaeo-Arabic translations, we offer the theoretical framework of 'Centre versus Periphery' to better understand the evolution of the Maghrebi translations and examine how migration affects translation traditions. Subsequently, we discuss North African Bible translations, known as *shurūḥ* (singular, *sharḥ*, literally 'commentary'), *sharḥ* translations of post-biblical texts, and, finally, Judaeo-Arabic translations of Modern European literature.

1.0. Judaeo-Arabic Translations

1.1. Pre-Saadian Translations

Judaeo-Arabic translations have a long history, dating back to the first millennium. Early Judaeo-Arabic translations of parts of the Bible were composed around the eighth and ninth centuries CE and are preserved in Geniza fragments. These consisted of a

phonetic transcription of Arabic into Hebrew script that does not rely on Classical Arabic spelling (Blau 1992; Tobi 1993; 1996; Blau and Hopkins 2007; Vollandt 2015, 75–80). These early translations were literal in nature, most likely reflecting oral traditions. They are commonly known as ‘pre-Saadian’, as they were composed before Sa’adya Gaon’s *Tafsīr*.

1.2. Sa’adya Gaon’s *Tafsīr*

The most famous early Judaean-Arabic translation of the Bible is Rav Sa’adya Gaon’s (882–942) monumental translation known as the *Tafsīr* (Steiner 2011; Brody 2013; Ben-Shammai 2015), composed in medieval Judaean-Arabic (Blau 1999; 2001).¹ Rav Sa’adya Gaon’s *Tafsīr* broadly adheres to Classical Arabic syntax and does not follow the word order of the Hebrew text, in marked contrast to the Aramaic of Targum Onkelos of the Torah and the later Judaean-Arabic Bible translations discussed below. Because medieval Judaean-Arabic was a common scholarly vehicle that enabled Jewish intellectuals across the Islamic world to communicate and exchange knowledge, it had relatively few dialectal elements. Texts written in medieval Judaean-Arabic were typically unvocalised, thus enabling readers to read them with their own pronunciation in mind.

¹ Blau refers to this variety as ‘post-classical Arabic’ (Blau 1998, 115–16). On the ambiguity of this term in an Islamicate/Arabic context see Bauer (2007).

1.3. Adaptations of the *Tafsīr*

In subsequent centuries, Rav Sa'adya Gaon's translation acquired sacred status, and manuscript copies of it were available in Jewish communities throughout the Islamic world. However, with time the *Tafsīr*'s language became less intelligible, as local Judaeo-Arabic varieties became more colloquial. In particular, the Arabic syntax adhered to in the *Tafsīr* was no longer shared with the dialects of these later audiences. Hence, 'adaptations' of Sa'adya's *Tafsīr* were created to address this growing concern. Some of these are preserved in manuscripts (Avishur 2001, 84–105).

1.4. *Al-Sharḥ al-Sūsānī*

In the sixteenth century, Issachar ben Sūsān ha-Ma'aravi, who immigrated from Fes (Morocco) to Safed (Eretz Israel), composed his *Al-Sharḥ al-Sūsānī*, a Judaeo-Arabic translation of the entire Hebrew Bible, as well as the *haftarot* and the Scroll of Antiochus. In the introduction to his *Sharḥ*, he explains that Sa'adya Gaon's excellent *Tafsīr* could no longer be understood even by scholars of his time. Therefore, he believed that a literal translation following Hebrew syntax would be the best way to ensure understanding of the biblical text for future generations.

Ben Sūsān's translation was, therefore, literal, with barely any deviation from the Hebrew text. Consequently, he created an *artificial language* with a syntax foreign to that of spoken Arabic. Reflecting the author's personal history, the language of *Al-Sharḥ al-Sūsānī* is a mixture of Maghrebi and Eastern Arabic dialects. It also retains a significant number of phrases from Sa'adya's *Tafsīr*.

He added exegesis on words and specific phrases (*bayān*), which include, for example, synonyms in various Arabic dialects “so that each individual may understand it and read it in the Arabic of his area, if he so wills.” Despite his intentions, this translation did not achieve widespread circulation (Doron 1985).

2.0. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Centre versus Periphery

Since the fifteenth century, additional Judaean-Arabic Bible translations evolved across the Muslim world, reflecting local translation traditions that aim to enhance the intelligibility of the ancient text by bringing the translation somewhat closer to the local vernaculars. The processes that shaped the evolution of these North African Judaean-Arabic translation traditions can be explained using a theoretical framework that highlights the distinction between cultural centre(s) and periphery. In some fields, such as economics or political science, this question is well framed, as one can empirically quantify economic activity or identify the official seat of government. However, the question of centre(s) versus periphery is more ambiguous in culture studies, where it is often difficult to determine one or the other, leading to controversy around cultural appropriation, globalisation, and Europocentric historiography (Kaps and Komlosy 2013). In the present paper, the discussion of centre(s) and periphery will be limited to the domain of Jewish communities within North Africa itself, avoiding the broader controversy.

The question of which North African Jewish communities were cultural centres and which were periphery is not as straightforward as it may seem. For example, in Algeria, the bustling capital Algiers was an important political and cultural centre for French-occupied Algeria, making the more isolated landlocked city of Constantine in Eastern Algeria part of the periphery. Or was it? Periphery in what respect? As will be discussed below, by the twentieth century, Constantine had become the centre of the Algerian Judaeo-Arabic culture, after that culture had been brushed aside under the waves of modernity in the capital Algiers. One might claim that only by being on the periphery of French cultural dominance could Constantine become a pinnacle of the region's Judaeo-Arabic culture. In other words, only by being on the *periphery* in one aspect of culture, could it become a *centre* in another aspect of culture. Hence, whether a place is central or a peripheral is not necessarily a question of geography or perspective, but a question of subject matter.

This complexity is well manifested in translation traditions and related customs, where the distinction between centres and periphery is further blurred, as each community may have its own customs and translation traditions. At times we find that even neighbouring synagogues in the same city celebrate different customs relating to their translation corpus. Take for example, the famous liturgical poem (*piyyuṭ*) *Mi Khamokha*, composed in Hebrew by Rabbi Judah Halevi in twelfth-century Spain, which recaps the story of the scroll of Esther. This poem, which was loved by many communities in North Africa (and beyond),

was translated into Judaean-Arabic and inspired the writing of additional *Mi Khamokha* poems to commemorate local miraculous instances of deliverance. The customs surrounding this poem vary from one community to another. In some, this *piyyuṭ* was recited together with its Judaean-Arabic translation, while in others only the original Hebrew text was read in the synagogue. In some communities, it was recited on *Shabbat Zakhor*, the Sabbath that precedes Purim, while in others it was recited on the day of Purim itself (Tirosh-Becker 2006).

2.2. Migration of Translation Traditions

The distinction between the original oral *sharḥ* traditions and their written manifestation is related to our discussion of cultural centres versus periphery. *Sharḥ* traditions evolved locally. However, when people, especially rabbis, moved to new communities or new countries in search of a job or due to new family ties, they often carried with them the *sharḥ* tradition from their old home, leading to interactions between different *sharḥ* traditions.

A striking example of this migration process is found in the *sharḥ* traditions of the Scroll of Antiochus (*Megillat 'Antiyokhus*) from Ghardaia (Algeria) (Tirosh-Becker 2015b). The Scroll of Antiochus is a historiographical account of the wars of the Hasmoneans and the origin of the festival of Hanukkah. The original Scroll was written between the second and the fifth centuries and was later translated into many Jewish languages, including Judaean-Spanish (Yaari 1962, 143) and Judaean-Arabic. Ghardaia is a remote desert-dwelling community, located in an oasis deep within the Sahara desert, 500km south of Algiers (Tirosh-Becker

2017). In that community, I found two different *sharḥ* traditions for the Scroll of Antiochus. One of these two *shurūḥ* was written in the Judaeo-Arabic dialect of that isolated region, known as the Mzāb.² However, the second of these *shurūḥ* was more perplexing, as it exhibited the characteristics of a Moroccan dialect.

So how did a Moroccan translation end up in the Algerian Mzāb? Looking at the map, one sees that Ghardaia is an important oasis on the trade route that crosses the Sahara Desert from Morocco to Tunisia (Stein 2014, 2–3). It is known that the Ghardaian Jewish community was of heterogeneous origins. Some families trace their origins to Djerba (Tunisia), others to Morocco (Ṣabbān 2002, 149, 155; Stein 2014, 3). Some of the rabbis who led the Ghardaian Jewish community in the twentieth century, and possibly even earlier, arrived in the Mzāb from south Moroccan towns such as Demnate and Marrakesh (Ṣabbān 2002, 179; J. Tedghi p.c.). It is likely that the aforementioned Moroccan *sharḥ* arrived in this remote Algerian oasis along these trade and migration routes.

3.0. Modern Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations

The aforementioned *Al-Sharḥ al-Sūsāni* was one of the first Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Bible written in modern Judaeo-Arabic. It was followed by many others, all aiming to bring the

² There are limited data on the Judaeo-Arabic dialect of Ghardaia (Tedghi 2010, 5194). However, among its characteristics is the preservation of the distinction between the sibilant consonants *s*, *š*, *z*, *ž* (Tirosh-Becker 2015b, 195). On the Muslim dialect of the Mzāb see Grand'henry (1976).

translation somewhat closer to local vernaculars. These Bible translations, known as *shurūḥ*, were orally transmitted through the generations from teacher to disciple, and from father to son. Only in recent centuries were some of these translation traditions captured in manuscripts or published in printed books, ensuring their preservation for future generations (Tirosh-Becker 1990; Bar-Asher 1999c; 2001; Maman 2000, 48–53; Avishur 2001, 106–11).

Sharḥ traditions were orally transmitted and evolved over time, and the identity of their original authors is largely unknown. In some cases, we know the identity of the rabbis who put their communities' translation traditions into writing. Given the scope and responsibility of such a task, only prominent rabbinic leaders took upon themselves such an endeavour. Examples include Rabbi Raphael Berdugo of Meknes, Morocco (Bar-Asher 2001), Rabbi Avraham Ben-Harush of Tafilalt, south-eastern Morocco (Bar-Asher 2022), Rabbi Yosef Renassia of Constantine, Algeria (§4.1 below), and Rabbi Ḥay Dayyan from Tunisia (Doron 1991).

Rabbi Raphael ben Mordechai Berdugo (1747–1821) was one of the foremost rabbis of his time in all of Morocco, and the most important scholar in the history of the Meknes Jewish community. Berdugo's *sharḥ*, *Leshon Limmudim*, is a brief Judaean-Arabic translation of (most of) the Bible. This work incorporates earlier orally transmitted *sharḥ* translations from Meknes, which he had modified to harmonise with his contemporary colloquial Arabic. Berdugo added his own translation to biblical books for

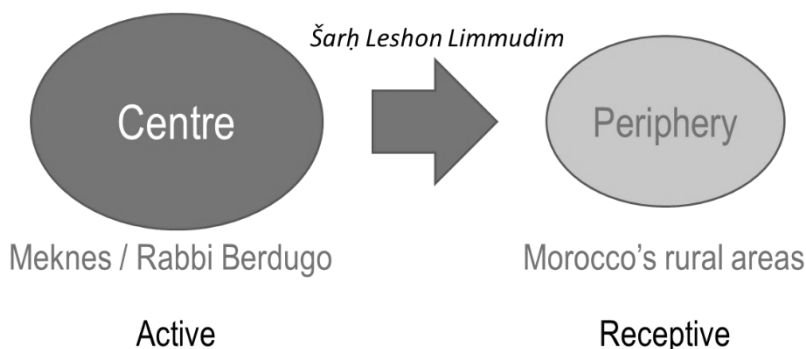
which there was no available oral *sharḥ* tradition (such as the books of the Former Prophets).

It is told in Meknes that Rabbi Raphael Berdugo decided to write this book when he was traveling through Morocco's southern rural areas and found out that the teachers themselves were making mistakes while explaining biblical verses to their students. To ensure that a reliable written translation of the Bible would be available for all, effectively replacing the oral tradition that was prone to errors and mistakes, he composed *Leshon Limmudim* in the local Judaeo-Arabic variety. Indeed, the book *Leshon Limmudim* was copied more frequently than any other book in Morocco (Bar-Asher 2001).

3.1. Centre versus Periphery Model I

The case of *Leshon Limmudim* is an example of the hierarchy between a cultural centre and its periphery. Rabbi Berdugo embodies the concept of a Moroccan cultural centre (Meknes) aiming to educate Moroccan rural communities by standardising a Judaeo-Arabic Bible translation. As seen in Figure 1 (facing page), in this model the centre is the active player, while the periphery has a receptive role. The centre identifies a need in the periphery and responds by providing tools and standards, while the periphery accepts it. We will see a different interaction model as we continue our exploration of North African Judaeo-Arabic translations.

Figure 1: Centre versus Periphery Model I: the case of *šarḥ Leshon Limmudim* by Rabbi Raphael Berdugo of Meknes, Morocco.



3.2. The Language of the *Šarḥ*

The language of the modern *šurūḥ* differs significantly from the medieval Judaean-Arabic used by Rav Sa'adya Gaon in his *Tafsīr*. The language of the modern *šurūḥ* was forged under the influence of two opposing forces. On the one hand, the goal of the translation is to make the text comprehensible to the local community, leading to the incorporation of vernacular features. On the other hand, the sanctity of the source text—first and foremost the Bible—imposes an elevated style and conservative traits. As a consequence, the language of *šarḥ* traditions is characterised by a mixture of layers (Tirosh-Becker 1990; 2012; Tedghi 1993; Bar-Asher 1999a). It includes conservative Arabic elements, characteristics of medieval Judaean-Arabic, dialectal features that are no longer used in the daily spoken dialect, as well as local vernacular traits. Naturally, different *šurūḥ* vary in the relative prevalence of conservative components versus vernacular features, reflecting the period in which these translation traditions were formulated. For example, the language of the Moroccan

sharḥ to the Passover *Haggada* is not as elevated as the language of the Moroccan *sharḥ* to the Bible (Bar-Asher 1999b, 185–87). Furthermore, despite the presence of some colloquial features in the language of the *sharḥ*, this language remains significantly elevated even with respect to the language used by the rabbinic elite in their original exegetical compositions and other writings (Tirosh-Becker 2011a).

Common to all modern *shurūḥ* is their adoption of a word-for-word translation method, reflecting the original Hebrew word order, possibly due to the traditional influence of the famous ancient Aramaic translation of the Torah, Targum Onqelos (Bar-Asher 1999c, 27–29). Hence, the syntax of the *sharḥ* reflects the syntax of the original Biblical Hebrew text and not Arabic syntax. Moreover, even the Hebrew definite direct object particle את *et*, which lacks an exact counterpart particle in Arabic syntax, is translated in these *shurūḥ* by the artificial equivalent אילא *ila*.³ For example, consider the following translation from Constantine (Algeria).

- (1) וקאמת פ'י וסט אליל וב'דאת אילא ולדי מן חדאייא
 ותקם בתוך הלילה ותקח את-בני מאצלי
 'She arose in the night and took my son from my side'
 (1 Kgs 3.20)

Another trait common to many *shurūḥ* that stems from the revered status of the Bible is the presence of archaic and conservative linguistic phenomena that have long disappeared from the spoken dialect. One example is the distinct feminine plural

³ On the use of *ilā* in Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic texts see Hary (1991).

participle form with the suffix *-āt*, e.g., סאכנא *sāknāt* ‘living (in a place)’, which exists in Classical Arabic, but is no longer in use in Maghrebi dialects, where the masculine plural form with the suffix *-in* (e.g., *sāknīn*) denotes both genders (Cohen 1975, 94; Marçais 1977, 80–81). Yet, the Classical Arabic plural feminine form is found in *sharḥ* traditions, such as the *sharḥ* to Psalms and to the *haḥṣarot* from Constantine, Algeria (Tirosh-Becker 2012, 418), and the *sharḥ* tradition of Tafilalt, Morocco (Bar-Asher 1999a, 51).

The conservative traits in the language of the *sharḥ* are not limited to vestiges of Classical Arabic, but also include non-classical features that are no longer present in the spoken dialect. An example is the translation of the adverb ‘now’. While the Classical Arabic adverb is أَلآن *alān* and the spoken Judaean-Arabic adverb in Constantine is *dūqa* (also pronounced *dawqa* or *ḍūqa*), the adverb that appears in the Constantinian *sharḥ* is the older colloquial form דלװאק *dəlwaq* and, less frequently, דלװאקת *dəlwaqt* (Tirosh-Becker 2012, 419). *Dəlwaq* represents an earlier dialectal form: *haḍa al-waqt* (هَذَا الْوَقْتُ) > *dəlwaq* > *dūqa*. Such features were most likely introduced into the language of the *sharḥ* by earlier generations, when its language was in interaction with that spoken vernacular. However, with time the *sharḥ* gained its revered status and became more resistant to change, thus preserving dialectal features that have disappeared from the spoken dialects, which have since evolved. In addition, as discussed above, *sharḥ* traditions were also influenced by the relocation of rabbis from one community to another, adding further complexity to its language by introducing features from other dialects,

e.g., the use of the Tunisian adverb *yāsār* as an alternative translation for *mawǧūd* in the Constantinian *sharḥ*, both denoting ‘very, a lot’.

These conservative features are interwoven with colloquial phenomena, such as the dialectal forms *kla* and *xda* for the verbs ‘ate’ and ‘took’, respectively, which differ from the Classical Arabic forms أَكَلَ *akala* and أَخَذَ *axaḍa* and other Maghrebi dialectal forms, e.g., *kal*, *kel* and *xad*, *xed*, respectively (Tirosh-Becker 2021, 268). This creates an intricate combination, unique to this type of text. Despite the penetration of vernacular features, the numerous conservative traits (both classical and non-classical) have led to the perception of the *sharḥ*’s language as elevated, reflecting the revered status of this text.

4.0. Judaeo-Arabic Translations of Post-biblical Texts

Thus far, we have focused on Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Bible, as these are the cornerstone of any and every Jewish translation corpus, be that in Judaeo-Arabic, Ladino, or other Jewish languages. However, translations into Jewish languages, in general, and into North African Judaeo-Arabic, in particular, went far beyond the Bible to encompass other important Jewish texts, such as the Passover *Haggada* (Maman 1999), the moral teachings of Mishna tractate *ʿAvot* (Bar-Asher 2010, 329–39; Tirosh-Becker 2011a), various liturgical poems known as *piyyuṭim*, e.g., *hosha‘not*, *ṣaliḥot*, and *Mi Khamokha* (Tirosh-Becker 2006; 2011c; 2014), the *maḥzor* prayer book (Tedghi 1994), the Scroll of Antiochus (Tirosh-Becker 2015b), and more.

4.1. Rabbi Yosef Renassia's Literary Project

Of special interest is the outstanding Judaean-Arabic literary project by Rabbi Yosef Renassia of Constantine, Algeria, which is directly linked to the city's unique situation and its evolving role as a cultural centre for Algerian Judaean-Arabic.

The city of Constantine, the third largest in Algeria, is nested in the eastern region of the Atlas Mountain range, separated from its immediate surroundings by steep cliffs. The Jewish community of Constantine is among the oldest Jewish communities in North Africa. During the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, with the arrival of Jewish immigrants from Spain, this community became one of the most important Jewish communities in the Muslim world. Following the French colonisation in 1830, Constantine became a seat of one of the three French *consistoires* that governed Jewish life in colonial Algeria (the other two being Algiers and Oran). French colonisation of Algeria was completed in 1870, when all Algerian Jews were granted French citizenship according to the Crémieux decree. The colonisation and these political transformations led to the adoption of French as the main language for many Algerian Jews. The increasing influence of French culture and language in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Algeria weakened the status of Judaean-Arabic and its culture. Namely, not only was the Judaean-Arabic language pushed aside in favour of French, but older Jewish traditions that were associated with it were also slowly dismissed in favour of French modernity.

As a prominent leader in the Jewish community of Constantine, Rabbi Yosef Renassia (1879–1962) set out to counter

this process. Serving as the director of the *‘Etz Ḥayim Yeshiva* in Constantine, he believed that the best way to confront the process of erosion of the fabric of Algerian Judaeo-Arabic culture was through Jewish education and by providing a suitable literary corpus. This had set Rabbi Renassia on a literary project to which he dedicated close to five decades, from 1915 to 1960, composing more than a hundred volumes in Judaeo-Arabic, which together form a monumental and unprecedented literary-pedagogical library.

This project gives us an opportunity to take stock of the breadth of the Judaeo-Arabic translation corpus. Among the Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations (*shurūḥ*) published by Rabbi Renassia, often with his own commentaries, we find translations of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, selections from the books of the Prophets, known as the *haftarot*, and more. Rabbi Renassia also published fifteen volumes of his Judaeo-Arabic translation and commentary to the Mishna and parts of the Talmud.

Judaeo-Arabic translations and commentaries of liturgical texts were also included in this translation corpus, encompassing the Passover *Haggada*, liturgical poems (*piyyuṭim*)—the *seliḥot* recited in the month of Elul and during the Days of Awe, the *hosha‘not* recited during the holiday of Sukkot, and *Mi Khamokha* for *Shabbat Zakhor*, which precedes the holiday of Purim. Significant effort was directed by Rabbi Renassia to translations of classical Jewish texts, including a thirty-volume translation of Maimonides’s *Mishne Torah*, a twenty-six-volume translation of *Sefer ha-RIF* by Rabbi Yitzḥak Alfasi of eleventh-century Fes, and a

five-volume translation of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch.⁴ To ensure that his students had the necessary tools for their studies, Rabbi Renassia also prepared several dictionaries and grammar books for them to use (Tirosh-Becker 2015a, 439–46). He prepared Judaean-Arabic instructions for the customs and laws relating to Jewish holidays, too.

This wide-reaching project—carried out by a single person—was unique in twentieth-century Algeria. However, Rabbi Renassia was not the only Jewish scholar in Constantine who attempted to counter French influence by publishing Judaean-Arabic translations and commentaries. An earlier attempt, albeit on a more modest scale, was made in the late nineteenth century by Rabbi Shelomo Zarqa, who wrote several Judaean-Arabic works including a *sharḥ* and a commentary on Psalms (1–89), a commentary on Genesis and Exodus, and a commentary on the Passover *Haggada* and related Jewish laws (Elkayam 1999). In addition, a Judaean-Arabic translation of Joshua 1–5 was composed by three other Rabbis from Constantine, the Rabbis David ha-Cohen, Shelomo Zerbib, and Tsion Shukrun.

The city's Chief Rabbi, Sidi Fredj Ḥalimi (1876–1957), was renowned throughout Algeria and its surroundings (Charvit 2010). Graduates of the city's yeshiva, *ʿEtz Ḥayim*, who studied with Rabbi Renassia and Rabbi Sidi Fredj Ḥalimi, and whom I had the pleasure of interviewing, testified to the prominence of

⁴ For a detailed discussion on Rabbi Renassia's Judaean-Arabic translation of Rashi's Pentateuch commentary, see Fenton (2006).

these rabbis. Taken together, the efforts of these and other Constantinian rabbis made Constantine a centre for Judaeo-Arabic culture in the first half of the twentieth century.

4.2. Centre versus Periphery Model II

The cultural projects of Rabbi Renassia and other Jewish scholars from Constantine offer a model of the relationship between centre and periphery that differs from the one discussed above (§3.1). This model focuses on the inclination of cultural centres to adopt new trends, leaving room for the periphery to lead in aspects of culture that were cast aside by the original centre.

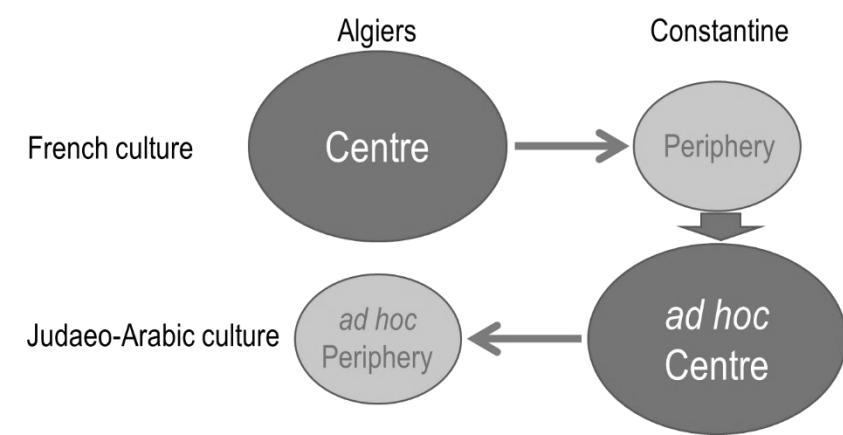
In this case, the Jewish population of the capital city of Algiers—the political, economic, and cultural centre of *French Algeria* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—readily adopted the French language and modern culture at the expense of their Judaeo-Arabic heritage. Although Algeria was colonised already in 1830, the integration of its Jewish population into French culture intensified following the 1870 Crémieux decree, which granted French citizenship to Algerian Jews, and more so following Jules Ferry's 1882 school reform, which made primary education free and compulsory to French children, including Algerian Jews (Charvit 2011, 105). Nowhere was this integration greater than in the capital city of Algiers, the seat of the French colonial government. As early as 1912, the French dialectologist Marcel Cohen in his seminal book on the Judaeo-Arabic dialect of Algiers noted this cultural transformation, even within the family setting. While the grandparents spoke almost exclusively Judaeo-Arabic, their offspring were bilingual, speaking French

and Judaean-Arabic alike, and the grandchildren used only French and could barely communicate with their grandparents (Cohen, M. 1912, 10–11). In a 1925 report by Albert Confino, the inspector for the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) education system in Algeria, he testifies to the weakening of Jewish education in the cities of Algiers (and Oran), as kids prefer to go to the movies and play sports rather than attend *Talmude Torah* (Cohen 1995, 107–8).

In contrast, Constantine, while being the third largest city in Algeria, remained removed—geographically and culturally—from this centre of Algerian *French* life. The Constantinian rabbis were more conservative and attempted to fend off the influence of French culture. Albert Confino, the AIU inspector, complained in a 1932 report that teaching in *Talmude Torah* in Constantine was still carried out in Judaean-Arabic. He also reports that traditional Hebrew texts are translated in these *Talmude Torah* into Judaean-Arabic (and not French) upon the parents' demands, as that was the only language that they understand (Cohen 1995, 110–11). My interviewees—who studied in Constantine in the first half of the twentieth century—confirmed that in addition to attending French schools, they also studied in traditional *Talmude Torah* twice a week (on Sundays and Thursdays) and during recesses, where they studied in Judaean-Arabic. Over time, French spread in Constantine as well, but, as described above, it was countered by significant literary and cultural efforts to preserve the older lingual and cultural traditions.

This resulted in the periphery city of Constantine becoming an *ad hoc* centre for Judaeo-Arabic culture, heritage, and literature in the first half of the twentieth century. The periphery thus stepped in to fill a gap left open by the historical centre (i.e., the gap of the abandoned Judaeo-Arabic heritage), promoting Jewish cultural leaders, such as Rabbi Renassia, to embark on far-reaching endeavours to preserve his ancestors’ Judaeo-Arabic traditions and language, both inseparable from his Jewish identity. Indeed, we know that Rabbi Renassia’s work reached an audience beyond the confines of his city, and that many of his books were offered for sale in Jewish bookstores in Morocco (Fenton 2006, 266). This model of centre versus periphery is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Centre versus Periphery Model II: Constantine as an *ad hoc* centre for Judaeo-Arabic culture in twentieth-century Algeria



The role of Constantine as a centre for Judaeo-Arabic culture was not limited to Rabbi Renassia and his contemporaries. It is also reflected in the realm of Jewish Journalism. In the late nineteenth century, Judaeo-Arabic journalism was wide-spread

in Algeria, with journals such as *Maguid Micharim* published in Oran and *Qol Ha-Tor* published in Algiers. Judaean-Arabic journals had ceased to appear in Algeria by the turn of the twentieth century in favour of French language journals (Tirosh-Becker 2011b, 130–32). The only Judaean-Arabic journal published in Algeria in the twentieth century was *al-Ḥikma*, printed in Constantine in the years 1912–1913 and then again in 1922–1923, under the editorship of Rabbi Avraham Zerbib (1870–1942). From a list published in *al-Ḥikma*'s issue from 16 May 1913 we learn that the journal's circulation extended throughout Algeria. According to this list, the journal could be purchased in all the townships in the District of Constantine in east Algeria (Constantine, Annaba, Batna, El Beïda, Tebessa, Khenchela, Sétif and Biskra), in many towns in the District of Algiers in central Algeria (Algiers, Aflouville, Médéa, Miliana, Orléansville, Bougie), as well as in the isolated communities of Ghardaia and Aflou on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Although it was probably not circulated in the western District of Oran, the journal could still be purchased in the town of Sidi Bel Abbès in that district.

5.0. Judaean-Arabic Translations of Modern Literature

The discussion above focused on Judaean-Arabic translations of texts within the Jewish cultural sphere. We associated this with efforts to preserve Jewish identity in the first half of the twentieth century in Algeria, where French cultural influence was significant, describing this process in the conceptual framework of centre versus periphery.

However, in other parts of the Maghreb, French influence was not as strong, and Judaeo-Arabic remained an important cultural language for the Jewish population. This may explain why in Tunisia we find Judaeo-Arabic translations of European *belles-lettres* (Tobi and Tobi 2000, 27; Attal 2007, 13 and index). In a sense, this exemplifies the broader influence of the European cultural centres on the colonised North African periphery, irrespective of the intra-Jewish centre versus periphery discussion presented in the previous sections. Not only were these translations the act of a literary elite; they were accepted by the community and read to children. Personal accounts record, for example, that in the 1930s and 1940s, Rabbi Raḥamim Barukh of Tunis would read aloud the Judaeo-Arabic translations of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Robinson Crusoe* to children and adults alike (Y. Baruch, p.c.).

5.1. Translations of French Classics

Most of the European books translated into Judaeo-Arabic were French classics, which are among the core literature of Western culture. These were translated from French into the Tunisian Judaeo-Arabic by local Tunisian scholars. Among the translated books we find:

- Alexandre Dumas's novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* (Fr. *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*) translated into Maghrebi Judaeo-Arabic as אלכונתא די מונתי בריסתו by Jacob Chemla and printed in Tunis 1889 (Uzan u-Castro Imprimeur). The book was well received by the community (Tobi and Tobi

2000, 267), and it was reprinted in Sousse in ca 1940 (Maklouf Nadjar Imprimeur), and in Tunis in 1950 (n.p.).

- Alexandre Dumas's novel *The Three Musketeers* (Fr. *Les Trois Mousquetaires*) translated as חכאית פ'רסאן אלמלך 'The Story of the King's Knights'. The book was translated into Maghrebi Judaео-Arabic by Shaul Daniel Ḥofni and printed in Tunis in 1910 (al-Maṭba'a al-Sharqiya).
- The *Fables of Jean de La Fontaine* translated as כתאב חדית "לא פ'ונתיך" 'The Book of Discourse among the Animals written by the famous French author La Fontaine', printed in Sousse in ca 1940 (Maklouf Nadjar Imprimeur). The name of the translator is unknown, as it was indicated only by his initials 'translated by the writer M.K.'
- Marie-Joseph Eugène Sue's novel *The Mysteries of Paris* (Fr. *Les Mystères de Paris*) translated by Ḥay Sitruk as כתאב מסתרי פאריז (Tobi and Tobi 2000, 261) and published in Tunis in 1889 (Uzan u-Castro Imprimeur).

5.2. Translation of English Books

A couple of English books were also translated into Judaео-Arabic and printed in Tunis:

- Of special interest is the Maghrebi Judaео-Arabic translation of the famous English novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, translated into Judaео-Arabic by Ḥay Sitruk as חכאית רובינסון כרוסוי and published in Tunis, most likely in the first decade of the twentieth century, and in Sousse in ca 1940. Unlike the other novels, which were written in

French, *Robinson Crusoe* is an English language novel, a language that had only a limited presence in North Africa. *Robinson Crusoe* was well-received worldwide and is often regarded as the first English novel. By the end of the nineteenth century, it had been published in hundreds of editions, spin-offs, and translations (Watt 1951, 95). It was also translated into several Jewish languages and Hebrew. It is possible that the Maghrebi Judaeo-Arabic translation of this novel was not made from the original English version, but was based on either the French or Hebrew translations of this work.

- Another English book, *The Red Eagle* by James Dewdson (דיוודסון), was translated into Maghrebi Judaeo-Arabic as אלנסר אלחומר by Yaakov Hacoheh and printed as a 596-page book in Tunis in 1908 (al-Maṭbaʿa al-Sharqiya printer). According to Attal, the author's name appears on the last page as ג'אמיס דיוודסון (Tobi and Tobi 2000, 274; Attal 2007, 107). I was not able to identify the original book.

5.3. Translation of Hebrew *Haskala* Novels

Maghrebi Judaeo-Arabic translations of seminal Hebrew novels of the Jewish Enlightenment movement (*Haskala*) were also published. These are Avraham Mapu's novels אהבת ציון 'The Love of Zion', the first modern novel written in Hebrew, and אשמת שומרון 'The Blame of Samaria' (Tobi and Tobi 2000, 22; Attal 2007, 13–14). Their Judaeo-Arabic translations were published in Tunisia

in the same period as the translations of the above French and English novels.

- Two independent translations of the book אהבת ציון 'The Love of Zion' were published in Tunisia. The first Judaeo-Arabic translation by Zemah ben Natan ha-Levi was published as אהבת ציון או חכאית אמנון ותמר 'The Love of Zion or the Story of Amnon and Tamar' in Tunis, ca 1890 (Imprimerie Internationale). The second Judaeo-Arabic translation, by Messaoud Maarek, under the pseudonym Ben-Amitai, was published as כתאב אלהב ואלוטן 'The Book of Love and Homeland' in Tunis in 1890 (Uzan u-Castro Imprimeur), re-published in Sousse 1943 (Makloulf Nadjar Imprimeur).
- A Judaeo-Arabic translation of אשמת ציון 'The Blame of Samaria' by Isaac Mamou of Nabeul was published as בין יהודה ואפרים דנוב וג'ראים או אשמת שומרון 'Between Judea and Ephraim Sins and Offenses or The Blame of Samaria' in Tunis (n.d.; Imprimerie de l'Orient [Uzan]).
- A translation of Mapu's novel עייט צבוע 'Hypocrite Eagle' was also translated into Judaeo-Arabic by Isaac Mamou of Nabeul, but this translation was never published and is found in manuscript only (Attal 2007, 14).

5.4. Translated Serial Novels in Journals

Another avenue for the Judaeo-Arabic translation and distribution of fiction was serial novels in North African Judaeo-Arabic journals. This was a widespread practice in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries worldwide, famous examples including

The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories (Law 2000). Notably, some of the French novels mentioned above—Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers* and Eugène Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris*—were also originally published as serial stories in French journals (known as *feuilleton*).

Not surprisingly, this practice was adopted in Judaeo-Arabic journals published in the same period in North Africa (both monolingual Judaeo-Arabic and bilingual Judaeo-Arabic/French journals), which also published many serial Judaeo-Arabic works (Attal 2007, 174–80). Some of these were serial Judaeo-Arabic translations of modern literature:

- *The Mysteries of Paris*, published in the journal אלתליגראף *al-Telegraph* (n.d.);
- *The Red Eagle*, published in the journal אלצבאה *al-Ṣabāḥ* (1907–1908[?]);
- *The Love of Zion*, published in the journal אלבסתאן *al-Bustān* (1890) and later in אלנג'מה *Al-Nağma* in 1942;
- *The Blame of Samaria*, published in the journal אליהודי *al-Yahūdi* (1938).

Judaeo-Arabic translations of stories and articles from Hebrew journals in Eretz Israel were also published in Tunisia and Algeria. One example is the Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Hebrew language eulogies read during Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's funeral on 16 December 1922. These eulogies were published in the Constantinian Judaeo-Arabic journal *al-Hikma*, translated from the original Hebrew text that appeared in the Jerusalem-based journal *Do'ar Ha-Yom* (Tirosh-Becker 2015a). Some Hebrew stories

and articles, which originally appeared in Hebrew journals, were later translated into Judaean-Arabic, and published as short booklets. For example, the *Story of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon* published by Nahum Slouschz in the New York Hebrew journal *Ha-Toren* was translated into Tunisian Judaean-Arabic and printed as a 32-page booklet in Tunis in 1921 (translator unknown). This story was reprinted in Sousse, c. 1943 (Attal 2007, 138–39). Another example is the relatively free Judaean-Arabic translation of Sarah Gluzman's story *My Moshe'le*. The original story was published in 1947 in the Hebrew journal *Ha-Do'ar*, and its translation was published in Djerba a year later, in 1948 (Henshke 2006).

6.0. Summary

In this paper, we have charted the evolution of Judaean-Arabic translations from the early pre-Saadian translations, through the tenth-century Rav Saadia Gaon's *Tafsīr*, which was written in medieval Judaean-Arabic, to the North African *shurūḥ* written in modern Judaean-Arabic. This translation corpus encompasses Bible translations as well as translations of liturgical and religious Jewish texts. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Judaean-Arabic translations of modern secular French, English, and Hebrew novels were also introduced.

Two models for the complex interaction between centre and periphery in the context of North African Judaean-Arabic translations became evident through the discussion of these translations. In the first model, the centre is superior to the periphery, it identifies a need in the periphery and responds by

providing tools and standards, while the periphery is receptive to adopting it. This model was reflected in Rabbi Raphael Berdugo's *Leshon Limmudim* from Meknes (eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Morocco). A second model, however, assigned the *ad hoc* active role to the periphery rather than to the centre. As the centre adopts new cultural trends, it enables the periphery to lead in aspects of culture that were cast aside by the preceding centre. This was demonstrated by the emergence of the large, yet peripheral, city of Constantine in eastern Algeria as an *ad hoc* centre for Judaeo-Arabic culture, heritage, and literature, in response to the rapid adoption of French culture by Jews of the capital Algiers.

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COMPARATIVE NOTES ON THE JEWISH ARABIC DIALECTS OF GABES AND DJERBA (TUNISIA)

Wiktor Gębski

The present paper addresses select phonological and syntactic phenomena observed in two neighbouring Jewish Arabic dialects originally spoken in the southern region of Tunisia, specifically the dialects of Gabes and Djerba. The former has been described by Gębski (f.c. a), while the latter was partially discussed by Saada (1963) and Behnstedt (1998) as part of comprehensive studies covering all the confessional varieties of Djerban Arabic. Moreover, the article contains text samples from both dialects, recorded in Israel in December 2022 and August 2023.

The Jewish dialect of Djerba is unique from a socio-linguistic perspective. Notably, it seems to be the only Jewish dialect of North African Arabic still spoken in its natural environment.¹ Speakers of other dialects, including Jewish Gabes, migrated to Israel, France, and other destinations follow-

¹ The Jewish community in the Moroccan city of Casablanca has a substantial number of members too. However, the use of Jewish dialects in Casablanca has declined, and the majority of Jews in Casablanca predominantly use either French or the Muslim variety.

ing the establishment of Israel in 1948. While many Jews have also left Djerba, particularly after the Yom Kippur War, a community of approximately 700 members persists there (Lasserre and Lechaume 2003, 346). In contrast, all the native speakers of Jewish Gabes currently live in Israel and France.

As will be demonstrated, despite their geographical proximity, the dialects exhibit several differences. These differences encompass significant grammatical categories, such as the future marker. On the other hand, there are also shared tendencies, such as non-resumptive expositions of nouns. This concise linguistic study is dedicated to Prof. Geoffrey Khan, with great admiration and gratitude for years of guidance, teaching, and care.

1.0. Sample Texts

1.1. The Tale of the Lumberjack (Jewish Gabes)²

Speaker: Haya Mazouz, age: 80; Time and place of the recording: Ramle, Israel, August 2023

- (1) *naḥkilkəm ‘al hād əl-ḥaṭṭāb*
‘I will tell you [a story] about a lumberjack.’
- (2) *yəmši yḥaṭṭab yləmm ḥaška*
‘He goes to cut down and collect logs.’
- (3) *yāxəd hād əl-aḥṭāb yḥəžžum l-kuwwāš*
‘He takes those branches and brings them to the baker.’

² The system of transcription used here is morphophonemic and follows Gębski (f.c.). In the translation, I have made an effort to represent the Arabic text as faithfully as possible.

- (4) *yaʿti naḥṣ ʔl-kūša yaʿti flūš u naḥṣ ʔt-tāni yəmšī bī ʔl-dār*
 ‘He gives half of them to the bakery, [the baker] gives him money, and he goes with the other half home.’
- (5) *yšəxxən bī ʔl-bīt, ʔd-dənya barda u yšəxxnu ʿalī ʔl-mākla wəlla tāy, yəšrbu*
 ‘They heat with it the house, the weather is cold, and they heat with it the food, or drink tea.’
- (6) *u hāk ʔl-naṣf³ āxar xabža u žitūn, kull yūm kif kif, hādāk li ʿandu*
 ‘And that other half, [he buys with it] bread and olives, every day the same, this is what he has.’
- (7) *ayya barra ayyām yžīw ayyām mərṭu ḥablət*
 ‘After some time his wife got pregnant.’
- (8) *qālla kifāš naʿmlu? ʔl-fraš hūwa yərqaḍ rāšu mən-hna u hiya rāšha mən-hna*
 ‘He told her: “What are we going to do now?” The bed—he sleeps with his head from this side and her head from that side.’
- (9) *wīn nrəqqdu ʔl-wləyyəd? u fi šnūwa nləbbšū? wīn nḥaṭṭu ʔl-wləd? ma ʿandnāš blāša*
 “Where will we put the baby to sleep? In what will we dress him? Where will we put the baby? We do not have space.”
- (10) *šnūwa naʿmlu bī? šnuwa nwəkkilū? aḥna nāklū xabža u žitūn, mən-nīn nžībūlu ʔl-ḥləb?*
 “What will we do with him? How will we feed him? We eat bread and olives, where will we bring the milk from?”

³ The interchanges of /f/ and /š/ in this lexeme (compare with verse 4 above) are a common phenomenon in Jewish Gabes.

- (11) *qātlu šnūwa na'mlu? māla nəmši naqtəl rūḥi 'ala xātru? li yədxəl yəži*

'She told him: "What will we do? Should I go and kill myself because of him? Whatever happens, happens."'

- (12) *qā'din hakka yəxammu šnūwa ya'mlu, mšāt tẓīb əl-ma, mən əl-'in*

'They sit like this, thinking about what they will do, she goes to take water from the well.'

- (13) *təmma nāxal ^{HE}šam kol ha^{HE}-nša yətləmmu u ya'bīw əl-ma fi-l-ḥəllābi akka*

'There is a brook and all the women gather there and fill their jars with water, like this.'

- (14) *təmma ḥəllābi zḡir u təmma 'bār kbīr, yḥaṭṭūha 'ala ktəffa u tẓi*

'There is a small jar and there is a big pot, they put it on the shoulders and go.'

- (15) *yətləmmu bīha nša aaa kifāš qātləm řāzli yḥabb nahḥi l-ḥbāla u ma-'annāš⁴ ma nwəkklē, ma 'annāš wīn nrəqqdū, ma 'annāš wīn nḥaṭṭū*

'Women gather near the brook: "Oh how are you?" She told them: "My husband wants me to abort the pregnancy, and we do not have anything to feed him, we do not have a place for him to sleep, we do not have where to put him."'

⁴ Due to the regressive assimilation of /d/ to /n/, i.e., 'andnāš* > 'annāš.

- (16) *qālūla li yži yži, b-qəšmu, ma txammīš, l-wāḥad yži l-əd-dənya, ɾəbḃi yžiblu l-qāš ntāʿw*
 ‘They told her: “Whatever comes, comes, with a blessing, do not overthink, when someone comes to this world, God gives them their share;”’
- (17) *qāṭla nšalla, ma nḥātūš*
 ‘She told her: “If God wills,” she did not abort.’
- (18) *ayya hādūk tuwwa qaʿdīn, yətxabbəṭ əl-mṛa u ɾāzəl ʿal hāk əl-ḥbāla*
 ‘So they sit now, the woman and the man quarrel about the pregnancy.’
- (19) *u tamma qahwa kbīra, we ^{HE}yašvu šama medabrim^{HE} l-ʿbād u tamma šəltān*
 ‘And there is a big cafeteria, and people sit there and talk, and there is a sultan.’
- (20) *əš-šəltān hāda, hūwa wa əl-wžir, yžīw ʿal əl-bḥāym, lbāš kif tāʿ l-ʿbād u yḏūru mən blāša əl-blāša, wəšlu əl-qahwa*
 ‘That sultan, he and a minister, came on donkeys, dressed like normal people, and they go from one place to another; they arrived at the cafeteria.’
- (21) *ʿtāwəm yašrbu, ^{HE}hem lo yodim^{HE} ḥšabbu l-ʿbād žāw mən ^{HE}eyze makom^{HE}*
 ‘They gave them something to drink, they did not know, people thought they came from a place.’
- (22) *tamma wāḥad yxattər bi-l-rəmla, ^{HE}sam ota al ha-bad^{HE}, u yqūllək ma ^{HE}ha-ʿtid šəlxā^{HE}*
 ‘There is a person who draws in the sand, he puts it on a piece of fabric and tells you your future.’

- (23) *hūwa ka-yaʿmāl hakka, šəbʿa hakka, qāllu taʿrəf šnūwa bəš yšir?*

‘He would do it like this, with a finger, like this, and he told him: “Do you know what is going to happen?”’

- (24) *əl-ḥaṭṭāb, mərṭu ḥābla u ḥabb tšib wəld, wa l-wəld⁵ ʿandu ḥmāra fi-wədnu li ytwāləd*

“The lumberjack, his wife is pregnant and will give birth to a boy, and the boy will have a birthmark on his ear when he is born.”

- (25) *u l-wəld hādāk əš-šəltān ymūt, ywəlli hūwa šəltān, wa šəltān tuwwa ka-yəšmaʿ*

“And this boy, the sultan will die, and he will become sultan; and the sultan can hear everything now.”

- (26) *qāllu kifāš? qāllu akka məktūb fi-l-wāḥda*

‘He told him: “How is it possible?” He said: “This is what is written.”’

- (27) *əš-šəltān fərrəks rqa dār əl-ḥaṭṭāb u ^{HE}məḥake^{HE} ḥatta tūləd*

‘The sultan looked for the lumberjack’s house, and he waited until [the woman] gave birth.’

- (28) *ayya wəldət əl-mṛa, wəldət əl-mṛa ^{HE}mamas^{HE} əl-wəld yḥaṭṭu ʿalim yərqəd*

‘So the woman gave birth, indeed she gave birth to a boy, and they put him to sleep on top of them.’

⁵ The standard form of this word is *wəld*, since short vowels in open syllables are not permitted in Jewish Gables. The form *wəld* has likely emerged due to the influence of Modern Hebrew, in which its cognate is *yeled*, i.e., it features a short vowel in the first open syllable.

- (29) *u wāḥad žāblu dżāža, wāḥda žābət lbāš, ma ʿndəm šəyy, l-
ʿbād ʿtāwum*
‘And someone would bring him a chicken, someone else
clothes; they do not have anything, the people gave them.’
- (30) *u bda yəkbar l-wlāyyəd, wəlla ʿandu arbaʿ šhūr hakka fi
yadda, u ža əṣ-ṣəltān wa əl-wžir ^{HE}be-tor^{HE} ʿbād kif ən-nāš*
‘And the boy started growing up, he reached the age of
four months, he is like this in her hands, and the sultan
and the minister came [dressed] as regular people.’
- (31) *ayya qālḥəm aššlāma, qālu aššlāma, hāda wəldək? qālu: ēy*
‘So he told them: “Hello.” They said: “Hello. Is this our
child?” They said: “Yes.”’
- (32) *qālḥəm: akka ʿayšin antūm? ma ʿandkəm šəyy, ayya bīʿūli əl-
wlāyyəd*
‘He told them: “This is how you live? You do not have
anything, so sell me the child.”’
- (33) *qālu: kifāš nbīʿlək wəldi?*
‘He told him: “How will I sell you my child?”’
- (34) *qāllō: mətək ʿām āxor tžīblək ^{HE}od^{HE} wəld wa āna naʿtik flūš
twəlli məštaḡni, ywəllilək dār ywəllilək mākla wa ənti tʿiš bī,
šnūwa əl-wəld hādāk yaʿməllək?*
‘He told him: “Your wife will give birth to one more child,
and I will give you money, you will become rich, you will
have a house, and food, and you will live from this money;
how will this child benefit you?”’
- (35) *qātlu: la, āna ma naʿtiš wəldi, āna ma nbīʿūš*
‘She told him: “No, I will not give you my child, I will not
sell him to you.”’

- (36) ^{HE}*ba-sof^{HE} rđāw, b‘āwlu wləd xdāw buxta flūš*
 ‘In the end, they agreed, they sold the boy and they took lots of money.’
- (37) *ša ‘məl hāk əl-ħžīn əš-şəltān? xda əl-wləyyəd, ħattū fi-şəndūq, u ləwwəħ əš-şəndūq fi-l-wād, hāk əš-şnəddāq yəmši fi l-ma*
 ‘What did that miserable sultan do? He took the child, he put him in a box, he left the box on the river; and the river, the box goes on [its] water.’
- (38) ^{HE}*pitom^{HE} tamma wāħad fəllāħ yəxdəm, ža yāxəd əl-ma mən əl-wād u yərqa hāk əš-şəndūq māši*
 ‘Suddenly, there is a farmer working, he goes to take water from the river, and he finds that box moving [on the water].’
- (39) *žāb əš-şəndūq, ħallū yərqa wləyyəd yəbki*
 ‘He brought the box, opened it and found a boy crying.’
- (40) *xda əl-wləyyəd, ^{HE}miskən^{HE}, yər‘aš u mša l-mərtu: ya mra ya mra, šūfi šnūwa lqīt fi l-wād*
 ‘He took the poor boy, he was trembling, and he went to his wife: “Wife! Wife! Look what I wound in the river!”
- (41) *qātlū: šnūwa lqīt? qālla: wəld!*
 ‘She told him: “What did you find?” He told her: “A child!”
- (42) *qātla: žābūna řabbi, aħna ma ‘annāš zğār, ma ‘annāš wlād, žābənna řabbi wəld wa nwəllu wəldna*
 ‘She said: “God has brought him to us, we do not have our own children, God has brought us a child and we will make him our own.”’

- (43) *baṛra wəlla əl-wəld 'amru šəb'atāš təmməntāš u yəxdəm m'a bāḃa u ža hādāk əš-šəltān hūwa yḏūr mən ḏār əl-ḏār yšūf šnūwa əl-blād fiha, šnūwa əd-dənya*
 'The boy was seventeen or eighteen years old, and he worked with his father and the sultan came, he was going from one house to the other, he wanted to see how the city was, how everything was.'
- (44) *hūwa wṣaḷ rqa hāk əl-mṛa əl-rāzəl xda wəldu u mša bi əl-ḏār bəš yāklū, qā'dīn yərtāḥu taḥt əl-naxla, hūwa ža qāllu: aššlāma*
 'He arrived and found that woman, the man took his son and went home with him to eat, they were sitting under the tree to rest; he [the sultan] came and said: "Hello."
- (45) *qāllu: əža aṣṣab, qāllu: la, la, aḥna mət'addīn aḥna māšyīn*
 'He told him: "Come and drink," he said: "No, no, we are just passing by, we are on the way."
- (46) *qāllu: hāda wəldək? qāllu: ē, wəldi*
 'He told him: "Is this your son?" He said: "Yes, it is my son."
- (47) *hūwa šāf 'alī rqa əl-ḥmāra fi wədnu*
 'He looked at him and found the birthmark on his ear.'
- (48) *qāllu: hāda wəldək? qāllu: ē, wəldi*
 'He told him: "Is this your son?" He said: "Yes, it is my son."
- (49) *u əl-mṛa: hāda wəldək? qātlū: ē, wəldi, šnūwa ən-nəšda hādi?*
 'And to the woman: "Is this your son?" She told him: "Yes, it is my son. What is this question?"
- (50) *ža ər-rāzəl qāllu: nqūllək əl-ḥaqq, hāda wəld əl-wād*
 'The man went and told him: "I will tell you the truth, this is a child of the river."

- (51) *qāllu: kifāš wəld əl-wād?*
 ‘He told him: “What do you mean a child of the river?”’
- (52) *qāllu: māši āna nāxəd əl-ma, rqiṭ šəndūq, u l-wlāyyəd yəmši*
 ‘He told him: “I went to take water, I found a box and the child [inside] moving [on the river].”’
- (53) *aaa hūwa ‘raf tuwwa, qāllu: šūf, ṭhabb wəldək yṭiḥ fi-dənya*
bāhya na‘ṭik nəktəblək žwāb, əl-dār əš-šəltān, yqablū y‘allmū
əš-šəna‘, na‘ṭiw flūš, ywəlli rāzəl mən əl-ḥrīma
 ‘Oh, he understood now, he told him: “Look, do you want your child to grow up in a better world? I will give you, I will write a letter; the house of the sultan will receive him, servants will teach him, they will give him money, he will become a gentleman.”’
- (54) *hūma nəyya, ma fahmūš əd-dənya, qāllu: mnīḥ*
 ‘They were naïve, they did not understand what was happening, they said: “All right.”’
- (55) *hūwa dxəl əl-wəld yšawwəb ḥwāyžu, wa hādāk xda ‘andu žəld*
kəbš u ktəb: hāda wəld yūšəl, aqṭlū
 ‘The boy went home to take his things, and that one took a piece of sheepskin and wrote: “When this boy arrives, kill him.”’
- (56) *u mən-lūṭa əl-firma ntā‘u u ḍuwwər hakka u ‘ṭālo fi-yəddu*
 ‘And from beneath his signature, he rolled it like this and gave it into his hand.’
- (57) *u hāk əl-wəld hažž fi yəddu ‘ša yəmši biha, yəmši yəmši yəmši*
yəṭla‘ žbəl, yahbaṭ žbəl, ḥatta wəšəl l-blāša, žbəl u mən-lūṭa mṛa
qā‘da gādi u ‘āmla tlāta ḥazra kullhəm bi-l-ḥṭab u ḥāṭṭa ^{HE}sīr
‘anāk^{HE} u qa‘dət ṭṭīb
 ‘And that boy took in his hand a stick and left, he walked, walked, and walked, he went up the hill, down the hill,

until he arrived at a place, a mountain, and at the foot of it a woman was sitting; she takes three rocks, covers them with logs and puts a massive saucepan and she cooks.’

- (58) *wa hūwa ža, qālla: ya mra, ‘andəkš šwīya ma?*

‘And he came and told her: “O woman, do you have a bit of water?”’

- (59) *qāltlu: šnūwa žābək l-hūni ənti? l-ġwāl u l-qatt‘iya tħabb⁶ yəqtlūk*

‘She told him: “What brings you here? Wizards and robbers want to kill you.”’

- (60) *qālla: ya mra āna ma na‘rafš, āna ‘ayy məyyət tuwwa ‘andi nahrīn nəmši ‘ala razliya, u ‘atšan u žā‘ān, ‘tātlu šrəb əl-ma u qālla: ‘andəkš blāša nərqəd?*

‘He told her: “O woman, I do not know, I am tired, I have been walking for two days, and I am thirsty and hungry;” she gave him a bit of water and he told her: “Do you have a place to sleep?”’

- (61) *ħattətlu ḥšira u rqəd ‘alīa kif əl-məyyət, ħatta rāšu ma fāqəš*
‘She laid for him some branches and he slept on them like the dead, he did not wake up.’

- (62) *ħayy žāw əl-qatt‘iya: mmm riħt bnādəm žāt*

‘Here come the robbers: “Mmm there is a human smell.”’

- (63) *qātlu: škūn yžīna blašt əl-ġwāl u qatt‘iya, škūn yži hūni?*

‘She told him: “Who will come to us? It’s a place of wizards and robbers, who will come here?”’

⁶ A rare case of so-called deflected grammatical agreement. In Jewish Gabes, as in many other Jewish dialects of Maghrebi Arabic, plural subjects tend to be in full agreement with their predicates, i.e., one would expect here *yħabbu*. In the Muslim dialects, on the other hand, plural nouns interpreted as inanimate collectives trigger 3FS agreement.

- (64) *qālla: tamma hūni ‘andək wāḥad*
 ‘He told her: “There’s someone here.”’
- (65) *ayya xallī xallī*
 “Oh, let it go, let it go.”
- (66) *‘tāthəm hāk əl-kusksi klāw ^{HE}kmo ḥazirim^{HE}*
 ‘She gave them couscous and they ate like pigs.’
- (67) *kəmməl əl-kbīr yḥabb yšūf əl-wəld*
 ‘The senior robber finished and he wanted to see the boy.’
- (68) *ža, u fi-yəddu hāk əl-žwāb; xda žwāb, ḥallu: əl-wəld hāda*
yūšəl, aqtlū
 ‘He came and in his [boy’s] hand was the letter; he took the letter, opened it: “When this boy arrives, kill him.”’
- (60) *faššəx hādāk, u ktəb: əl-wəld hāda yūšəl a‘wmū, ləbšū, u*
šawwbū, wa a‘tiwu y‘arrəš m‘a bənti
 ‘He erased that and wrote: “When this boy arrives, wash him, dress him, take care of him, and let him get married to my daughter.”’
- (70) *hūwa mša, wšal l-ḡādi, ma yḥabbūš ydəxxlū, dəžžū*
 ‘He left and arrived there, they did not want him to enter, they pushed him.’
- (71) *‘tāw əl-žwāb, hūma dəxxlū, ba‘d žəm‘a ‘amlu ‘arš, darbūka,*
mūžika
 ‘He gave them his letter, they brought him in, and after a week they had the wedding, drums and music.’
- (72) *wa əš-šəltān tuwwa yəmši mən dār əl-dār u fi-līla ža hūwa u*
əl-wžīr tā‘u qālu: š-tamma š-tamma? əl-līla əd-dənya xāyda u
zāza
 ‘And the sultan is now going from one house to the other and at night he and his minister come and say: “What is going on? It’s night and the world is full of commotion.”’

- (73) *qālūlu: bənt əṣ-ṣəltān bəš t'arrəš, əṣ-ṣəltān b'aṭəlha rāzəl*
 'They said: "The sultan's daughter is about to get married,
 the sultan sent her a man."'
- (74) *bərk hūwa šma' əl-kəlma hūwa māt wa hādāk əl-ʿriš wəlla*
ṣəltān
 'He only heard the news, he died and the groom became
 the sultan.'
- (75) *əlli məktūb 'al əl-žbīn lāžəm ma tšūfu əl-ʿin*
 'What is written on the forehead, should not see the eye.'

1.2. The Nazi Ivasion of Djerba (Jewish Djerba)

Speaker: Dan Hania, age: 85; Time and place of the recording: Safed⁷,
 Israel, December 2022

- (1) *l-waqt li žāw l-almān l-žərba, kān 'amri 'sar šnīn, tmənya*
 'When the Germans came to Djerba, I was ten or maybe
 eight years old.'
- (2) *l-almān, luwwəl, wuqt li žāw l-tūnəš, bdāw yāxdu l-yhūd bəš*
yəxdmu fi-^{HE}avodat parax^{HE}
 'In the beginning, when Germans came to Tunis, they
 started taking Jews to forced labour.'
- (3) *u bdāw yḥaḍḍru bəš ya'mlu kif 'amlu fi-ērōpa*
 'And they started getting ready to do what they did in
 Europe.'

⁷ Meaning that people cannot see their destiny and should not look for
 ways to change it.

- (4) *wa āna na‘qal šabbāt wāḥad, kənna fi-l-ğriba, kənna fə-ş-şla u nšūfu əl-^{HE}rav^{HE} tā‘ l-ḥāra l-kbīra rabbi moše ḥalfōn*
 ‘And I remember, one Shabbat, we were in Ghriba, we were in the synagogue, and we saw the rabbi of the Great Hara, rabbi Moshe Halfon.’
- (5) *ža fi-l-yūm šabbāt fi-jeep tā‘ l-‘aškər tā‘ l-almān, ža l-ğriba*
 ‘He came on a Shabbat in a jeep of the German soldiers to Ghriba.’
- (6) *ər-rabbi tā‘na, nwərrīlək əl-tšūra tāḥam, xāfu, qālu: š-tamma, rəbbi, ‘alāš žīt fi-l-nār šabbāt, qālu: gžira kbīra*
 ‘Our rabbis, I showed you their picture, got scared, they said: “What is happening? Why did you come on a Shabbat?” They said: “Big calamity.”’
- (7) *l-almān yḥabbu xamšīn kilo dhabb*
 ‘The Germans wanted fifty kilos of gold.’
- (8) *barra rəḥna fi-l-blād, fi-l-ḥāra əl-kbīra, ^{HE}žə^{HE} kull wāḥad li ‘addu dhabb yžīb yḥaṭṭu fi-l-qoffa bāš na‘tīw l-almān, ida ma na‘tīwmš xamšīn kilo, yəqṭlu əl-kəll*
 ‘We went quickly to the city, to the Great Hara, [asking] that everyone who has gold, bring it and put it in the basket so that they give it to the Germans; if we do not give them fifty kilos, they would kill everyone.’
- (9) *ləmmīna, žma‘na šwīya qəddāš ‘andna dhabb fi-l-ḥāra əl-kbīra, u žīna l-ḥāra əz-žgīra žāda bāš ‘andna*
 ‘We gathered, we collected a bit of the gold that we had in the Great Hara and we also went to the Small Hara, so that we have [the requested quantity].’

- (10) *əl-yhūd mšākən bdāw yəbkīw u hāda u harbu kull ḥad mša l-ḍāru*

‘The poor Jews started crying and ran away, everyone went to their home.’

- (11) *na‘qəl wuqt li žīt ma‘ būya l-ḍār wa hūwa məškin, ^{HE}aba šeli^{HE}, xda hādāk əl-dhabb šəl ^{HE}ima^{HE}, xda li ‘andu qəddāš šwīya dhabb li ‘anda, ^{HE}az^{HE} ḥaṭṭ kullika fi-^{HE}mitpaḥat^{HE} u mša*

‘I remember when I went home with my poor father, he took mother’s gold, he took what she had, he put it in a kerchief and left.’

- (12) *wa kānu žūž əl-^{HE}rabanīm^{HE} yšəddu fi-qoffa tā‘ dabb wāḥad mən-hna u wāḥad mən-hna wa žūž gestapo wərrām bi-l-šlāḥ u yədxlu mən-barra l-ḍār l-ḍār l-ḍār u mšākən yhūd kull ḥad ‘ta dabb*

‘And two rabbis would grasp the basket with gold, one from this side and the other from the other, and two armed Gestapo officers from behind, and they would enter every home and all the poor Jews would give gold.’

- (13) *wa hādik əš-šabbāt hādik, fi-l-‘ašiya, xaržət əš-šəbbāt, mšina nšūfu š-təmma u lqīna l-almān, xaržu bi-l-blād fi-l-līla hādik*

‘And that Shabbat, in the evening, when Shabbat was over, we went to see what was going on and we found the Germans, they left the city on that very night.’

- (14) *wuqt əl-ḥarb kānu mšəlmīn yqūlu: əl-yhūd, ḥa-yžīwna əl-almān ydbaḥ əl-yhūd wa aḥna nāxdu rəzqəm əl-kəll*

‘During the war, the Muslims would say: “The Jews—the Germans will come and slaughter the Jews and we will take all their property.”’

- (15) *wa kānu mšəlmīn y'āwnu l-almān*
 'And Muslims were helping the Germans.'
- (16) *ba'd wfāt kəmməlt əl-ḥarb, l-ḥkūma tā' frānša šəddət hāk əl-mšəlmīn ḍarbūhəm u mšāw, qaṭlu bi-l-kəll, li 'āwnu l-almān*
 'After the war was over, when it finished, the French government caught those Muslims, hit them, and left, killing all of them, those who helped the Germans.'
- (17) *u ba'dīn kif qāmət Israel, 'ām əl-twānša xdāw ištəqlāl, l-'ām šəttə u xamšin, l-yhūd, kān 'andəm xūf kbīr*
 'And after Israel was created, the year that Tunisians achieved their independence, in the year 1956, many Jews were very scared.'
- (18) *burša yhūd harbu mən-tūnəš u xallāw əl-rəzq tāḥəm, xallāw ḍyār, xallāw kull šəy, žāw hakka bla ḥwāyž tāḥəm*
 'Many Jews escaped from Tunisia and left their properties, left their homes, everything; they came like this without their things.'
- (19) *u tamma li mšāw l-franša, tamma li mšāw l-italia*
 'And some of them went to France, others went to Italy.'

1.3. Wedding Customs and Life with Muslims (Jewish Djerba)

Speaker: Naomi Cohen, age: 71; Time and place of the recording: Tiberias, Israel, December 2022

- (1) *l-ʿarš, kānu šəbʿa əyyām u šəbʿa əlyāli, kənt nəmši mʿa šhābi nəšūfu l-ʿrūša, kānu yaʿmlu l-ḥanna əz-zgīra u yaʿmlu l-ḥanna əl-kbīra*

‘The wedding—they would do it for seven days and seven nights; I would go with my friends to see the bride; they do the small henna and the big henna.’

- (2) *u kān yaʿmlu təzmīl ḥattān, wuqt əl-mṛa təmši l-ḥammām, əl-rāzəl fə-d-dār yaʿmlūlu təzmīl*

‘And they would have the bachelor party when the woman was in the *ḥammām*, the man would do it at his house—the bachelor party.’

- (3) *wuqt yəməšīw raḥla tāʿ rūša, yži l-ḡannāy, u yaʿmlu mākla, u yədəbḥu l-ʿlāləš, u yži yāklū l-kšəkšu, ma kənəš yāklū b-l-mḡārəf, ma kənəš mḡārəf, yāklū b-ydīn*

‘When they brought the bride, a singer would come, and would bring food, and slaughter lambs, and people would come to eat couscous; they did not eat with spoons; they would eat with hands.’

- (4) *la šhānāt u la mġārāf, ya‘mlu qəšš‘a kbira u yəq‘adu ‘al lūṭa, ^{HE}rak^{HE} əl-‘rūša u l-ḥattān ya‘mlūlūm kif ṭawla u yfərršūa bi-
zrābi u ya‘mlu bxūr u yžibu əl-kānūn u ybaxxru ^{HE}neged ha-
‘āyn ha-ra^{HE}*

‘There were no plates and no spoons, they would bring a large wooden bowl and sit on the floor; only the bride and the groom—they would make for them something like a table and they would put on it rugs, and they would light incense and bring a stove and cense against the evil eye.’

- (5) *u yrəff‘u l-mākla, ḏār l-‘rūša tərfaḏ əl-ḥattān u ba‘d əl-līla ət-
tānya ḏār əl-ḥattān yərəf‘u ḏār əl-‘rūša*

‘And they would raise the food, the bride’s family would lift the groom and after the second night, the groom’s family would lift the bride’s family.’

- (6) *u b‘adalli yəbqāw yədwīw ‘al əš-šūra, ^{HE}še^{HE} amṃ l-‘rūša šrāt
bənta u kān lqāw šūra mūši bāya yāšər qātla šūwa, hādak
hūwa li žəbti? məš yāšər, b‘adalli ḥ-yət‘ārku*

‘And then they would stay to talk about the dowry that the mother of the bride bought her daughter, and if they found the dowry not good enough, she [groom’s mother] would say: “Is this what you brought? It’s not a lot,” and then they would argue.’

- (7) *omṃ ʔl-ḥattān ṭhabb šūra kbīra yāṣər, ^{HE}az^{HE} qātla: ʔandi wəld wāḥad ʔažīž ʔaliya, u šənnūt⁸ bāš nəfraḥ bī u nəžiblu ʔrūša təžiblu ḥwāyəž bahīn u d-dhəbb u l-fuḍḍa u xəlxāl, hādāk ūwa li ʔmalti bəntək? āna wəldi ʔažīž ʔaliya yāṣər, ṭhabbi... taʔmli... šəlfī ʔl-flūš u žīdi fə-š-šūra... ^{HE}kōdəm^{HE} hūmān yṛāw ʔš-šūra*

‘The groom’s mother wanted a big dowry, so she would say: “I have only one son and he is very dear to me, and I have been waiting to make him happy and so we brought him a bride who was supposed to give him nice things, gold, and silver, and anklet; is this what you gave to your daughter? My son is dear to me, you like... do... borrow money and add to the dowry.” They would first look at the dowry.’

- (8) *yḥabbu bəššūwa⁹ l-ʔrūša təškən mʔa ʔžūžta u bʔadalli yžīw l-ʔrāk, hādi l-bənt tži l-ṃa təškīla*

‘They wanted the bride to live with her mother-in-law, and after that, they would argue, and the daughter would go to her mother to complain.’

⁸ A variant of *štənnūt* ‘to wait’; it has been attested also in the Jewish dialect of Ghardaïa (based on personal research).

⁹ A variant of *bāš*; as pointed out by the informant, it belongs to the higher register.

- (9) *ma ‘alləmti-ši¹⁰ bəntək la taxbəž, la ta‘žən, la tṭəyyəb, la taqdər u yəbdāw bi-l-‘rāk*
 “‘You did not teach your daughter how to bake, how to knead, how to cook, how to respect,” and they would start arguing.’
- (10) (...) *u kənnə fi-l-qdarr m‘a žirāna fi-šar‘a*
 ‘We respected our neighbours on the street.’
- (11) *kān šūq qrib ‘al əl-dyār, u ḥatta marra ma qālūna ma dwāw-ši klām dūni wəlla t‘ārəkna, wəlla klām qbāḥ, ḥatta šəy*
 ‘There was a market near the houses, and they [Muslims] never told us evil words and we never argued, or mean words, nothing.’
- (12) *kənnə šḥāb yāšər, wuqt li māma qālt l-wāḥḍa əz-zārāt li kənət qbāla, māma qālt l-zāra aḥna ḥa-nəmsīw l-franša*
 ‘We were good friends, when my mother told one of the neighbours who lived in front, my mother told her: “We are going to France.”’
- (13) *qātla: na‘rfu wīn ḥa-təmsīw, ma txabbī-ši ‘aliya, rəḥḥi yəhənnik*
 ‘She told her: “We know where you will go, do not hide from me, may God protect you.”’

¹⁰ In Jewish Gabes, the negating suffix is /-š/, i.e., no final /i/ is audible. It is a grammaticalised and truncated form of the lexeme šəy ‘thing’. The variant found in Djerba, therefore, preserves traces of the source form.

- (14) *u wuqt li yṭīḥ ^{HE}mamaš^{HE} ḥa-nžīw, bkāw žūž, māma m'a zāra
al-mšālma*

‘And when the time came to go, they both cried, my mom
and her Muslim neighbour.’

2.0. Linguistic Observations

2.1. Phonology

Both Jewish Gabes and Jewish Djerba display isoglosses typically ascribed to sedentary dialects, like loss of interdentalals and uvular realisation of /q/. Nevertheless, the phonology of each of the two dialects exhibits several distinctive features. When it comes to their consonantal inventory, one of the most notable differences is the realisation of sibilants. Although it seems that in both Jewish Gabes and Jewish Djerba, there is no phonemic distinction between alveolar (/s/, /z/) and alveolo-palatal (/š/, /ž/) sibilants, in Jewish Djerba, the alveolar and palatal consonants appear to have merged into a sound with a moderate level of stridency, represented as /ś/ [ç] and /ž/ [j]. On the other hand, in Jewish Gabes, the pronunciation of these consonants is more retroflex, represented as [ʃ] and [ʒ]. The merger of alveolar and palatalised sibilants in Jewish Djerba was first noted by Saada (1963, 16) and later confirmed by Behnstedt (1998, 58). However, in the speech of some Djerban Jews currently living in Israel, the realisation of /ś/ is more retroflex, specifically as /š/. This slight shift in pronunciation appears to have occurred under the influence of the sound system of Modern Hebrew, where the palatalised sibilant /š/ is pronounced with the tongue tip more retracted compared to /ś/.

The differences between Jewish Gabes and Jewish Djerba are also observable within the domain of vowels. The former has three phonemic short vowels, i.e., /ə/, /a/, and /o/ (Gębski f.c. a). On the other hand, Jewish Djerba seems to have only one phonemic short vowel, /ə/, aligning in this respect with Jewish Tripoli (Behnstedt 1998, 60; Yoda 2005, 31). In addition, Jewish Djerba exhibits several types of vowel elision which are not found in Jewish Gabes. One of them is the length reduction /ā/ > /a/ or /ə/, and /ū/ > /ə/. This is particularly the case with short lexemes in which the long vowel is in medial position, e.g., *kān* > *kən* ‘if’, *mūš* > *məš* ‘not’, *tāḥəm* > *təōm* ‘of them.’ Similarly, word-final vowels tend to be elided when followed by another word, e.g., *ḥatta hīya* > **ḥatt hīya*¹¹ > *ḥattiya* ‘even her’, *ḥa-yži* > *ḥiži* ‘he will come.’

2.2. Syntax

2.2.1. Expressions of Future

The two dialects in question exhibit different ways of expressing the future tense. Apart from the prefix conjugation, Jewish Gabes utilises two ways involving preverbal particles. The first one entails the particle *bāš/bəš*, as in the following example:¹²

¹¹ /h/ in Jewish Djerba is often dropped.

¹² Abbreviations used in the glossing: PFX: prefix form, SFX: suffix form, MS: masculine singular, FS: feminine singular, PL: plural, AP: active participle.

- (1) *ta'raf* *šnūwa* *bāš* *yšir*
 know.PFX.2MS what to happen.PFS.3MS
 ‘Do you know what is going to happen?’ (1.23)

This future marker originates in purposive clauses, in which the action expressed by the subordinate clause is always posterior in reference to the main clause. For instance, in the typically purposive sentence *mša bi al-dār bāš yāklū* ‘he went with him home to eat’ (1.45), the action of eating is in the future from the perspective of the action of going. It seems, therefore, that this temporal posteriority embedded in purposive clauses has opened a pathway for the development of *bāš* as the future marker. Moreover, the type of future encoded by *bāš* also seems to indicate its origin in purposive sentences. Namely, this particle usually expresses epistemic future, referring to evidence, reasoning, or beliefs. The speaker is, therefore, fairly sure that the event will indeed take place. Both in the passage above and in (1.74), the speaker makes an assumption about future events based on personal beliefs and evidence. This type of future is likely rooted in purposive clauses, where the common implicature is that the action expressed by the subordinate clause indeed took place (Schmidtke-Bode 2009, 178; Khan 2021). It is worth noting that the same function of the particle *bāš* has been attested in the Algerian Arabic dialect of the Jews of Wad-Souf and in the Malekite dialect of Djerba, which in the Ibadite community is shortened to /b-/ (Behnstedt 1998, 55; Gębski, f.c. b). As far as my data is concerned, the Jews of Djerba do not use this particle to express future.

Moreover, Jewish Gabes utilises an additional means of expressing the future, i.e., the grammaticalised active participle of the verb *ḥabb* ‘like’, as in the following example:

- (2) *əl-ḥaṭṭāb mǝrt-u ḥābla u ḥabb*
 the-lumberjack wife-3MS pregnant.AP and will
tǝḥb wǝld
 bring.PFX.3FS boy
 ‘The lumberjack, his wife will give birth to a boy.’

As pointed out by Gębski (2022), it appears that this device is used mainly to express predictions of low probability and unverifiable statements. The fact that Jewish Gabes makes use of the *ḥabb* future marker, sheds light on the provenance of the future prefix in Jewish Djerba, i.e., *ḥa*, as demonstrated by the following passage:

- (3) *māma šam‘at li ḥa-y‘alləmni mǝš yəhūdi*
 mother hear.SFX.3FS that will-teach.PFX.3MS not Jew
 ‘Mother heard that a non-Jew would teach me.’¹³

This particle is occasionally realised in fast speech as *h*, especially when the verb form starts with the *yə*- prefix. It appears that it functions as a marker of future events regardless of the level of their probability. In the passage in example (3), it encodes an event that has been planned in advance and is almost sure to take place. On the other hand, in the following example, the probability of the event is unsure and *ḥa* marks a volitive prediction, rather than a fact:

¹³ An excerpt from recordings.

- (4) *l-mšəlmīn* *ġādi* *‘arfu* *li* *aḥna*
 the-Muslims there know.SFX.3PL that we
ḥa-nəməšīw *l-israel*
 will-go.PFX.1PL to-Israel

‘The Muslims [who were] there knew that we would go to Israel.’

Behnstedt claims that this prefix is a grammaticalised and truncated form of the temporal preposition *ḥatta* ‘until’ (1998, 68). Although one cannot exclude this possibility, considering the data from Gabes, it seems more plausible that it originates in *ḥabb* and was extended from cases of unspecified probability, like in the passage (4), to mark all types of the future.

2.2.2. Dislocation and Topicalisation

In this section, I shall discuss two syntactic phenomena related to the extraposition of nouns and pronouns. When delving into cross-linguistic research that centres on the syntax of pronouns and their representation of information structure, linguists frequently draw a clear distinction between two fundamental phenomena: topicalisation and left dislocation (Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2021, 617). Topicalisation, also known as fronting, involves relocating a constituent from its default position to a pre-verbal one. Importantly, the topicalised element remains embedded within the sentence, obviating the need for resumption. In contrast, left dislocation comprises the extraction of a constituent from the main clause and its placement at the left periphery of the matrix sentence, outside its syntactic boundaries. Simultaneously, it involves resuming this constituent within the matrix

clause (Alexiadou 2006, 668). We will focus here on those cases where a constituent is placed outside the matrix clause.

As the text samples above suggest, left dislocation appears to be a common strategy in both Jewish Gabes, example (5), and Jewish Djerba, example (6). Notably, the dislocated constituent is marked by a distinct prosodic pause, explicitly setting it apart from the matrix sentence:

- (5) *l-wəld hādāk | əṣ-ṣəltān ymūt ywəlli*
 the-boy that the-sultan die.PFX.3MS become.PFX.3MS
hūwa ṣəltān
 he sultan
 ‘That boy, when the sultan dies, he will become sultan.’
 (1.25)

- (6) *āna | wəldi ‘ažīž ‘aliya yāṣər*
 I son.my dear on.me a lot
 ‘Me, my son is very dear to me.’ (3.7)

As has been mentioned, left dislocations are characterised by two main features: (1) the dislocated element is found outside the matrix clause, which is reflected via a clear prosodic pause separating the two parts of the sentence, and (2) the dislocated constituent is referred to in the main clause, primarily by means of resumption. These two parameters are exemplified by the above passages, where the dislocated constituent is resumed by a personal pronoun, as in (5), or pronominal suffixes, as in (6).

Nevertheless, it seems that both dialects in question utilise yet another expository strategy which does not meet the aforementioned criteria of left dislocation. Let us consider the following examples:

- (7) *əl-fraš* | *hūwa* *yərqaḍ* *raš-u* *mən-hna*
 the-bed he sleep.PFX.3MS head-3MS from-here
u *hīya* *rašha* *mən-hna*
 and she head.her from-here

The bed—he sleeps from this side, and she sleeps from that side.’ (1.8)

- (8) *l-‘arš* | *kānu* *šab‘a* *ayyām* *u* *šab‘a* *alyāli*
 the-wedding be.SFX.3PL seven days and seven nights
 ‘The wedding—they were seven days and seven nights.’
 (2.1)

As can be observed, in contrast to left dislocations, the fronted element in the sentences above is not resumed within the matrix clause; instead, it loosely establishes its thematic frame. This construction is commonly referred to as the ‘Chinese-Style Topic Construction’ (Chafe 1976; Li and Thompson 1976; Westbury 2016, 28). Since no resumption occurs in these constructions, the fronted element is semantically or pragmatically related to the sentence. Consequently, it appears that we are not dealing here with dislocation, meaning that the extraposed element was never an integral part of the matrix sentence, but rather serves as a topic-setting device. The topic, set in this manner, can persist throughout a significant portion of the discourse, as seen in (8), or it can be limited to a single sentence, as in (7). In the latter case, it seems that the function of this

construction is deictic, specifically, the speaker aims to vividly illustrate the described scenery to engage with the listener.¹⁴

3.0. Conclusion

This preliminary study demonstrates that, despite their geographic proximity, the Jewish dialects of Gabes and Djerba exhibit several differences. In the realm of phonology, the most pronounced distinction involves their vowel inventory. While Jewish Gabes seems to have three phonemic vowels, namely /ə/, /a/, and /o/, in Jewish Djerba, the sole phonemic vowel is /ə/. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the realisation of palatal sibilants in this dialect is more fronted compared to Jewish Gabes. The section on syntax discusses two phenomena, namely expressions of the future and dislocations. As argued, the preverbal future marker *ha-* found in Djerba likely originates from *habb*, a marker also attested in Gabes. Indeed, cross-linguistically, volitive verbs often evolve into future markers, as seen in English with *will* and Greek with $\theta\alpha$ (Gębski 2022). Dislocations, on the other hand, exhibit similar tendencies in both dialects. Of particular typological interest are non-resumptive extrapositions of nouns, resembling topical constructions found in Chinese. Undoubtedly, future studies will shed more light on the points of divergence and convergence between these two dialects.

¹⁴ It is noteworthy that this construction is widely used in other Judaeo-Arabic dialects in North Africa as well, such as Wad-Souf (Gębski, f.c. b).

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WRITTEN EGYPTIAN JUDAEO-ARABIC: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SPOKEN VARIETY

Benjamin Hary

This essay analyses many of the linguistic features of Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic (EJA). The essay is a synthesis of some of my publications in the past,¹ along with some new materials. It also draws data from Blanc (1974; 1981; 1985) and Rosenbaum (2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2004; 2008), who have published on EJA as well. Length limitations allow for only brief comments on the Hebrew and Aramaic components in the EJA lexicon (see Hary (1999; 2016a; 2017, 26–31). It is a great delight to dedicate this

¹ This essay is comprehensive as opposed to narrowly focused on more specific issues that are dealt with in the following publications: orthography in Hary (1990; 1991a; 1996); Hebrew and Aramaic elements in Hary (1999; 2016a); prepositions in Hary (2009b); history and politics in Hary (2003; 2016b; 2018). Furthermore, Hary (2017) discusses spoken late EJA characteristics as reflected in written EJA texts, answering questions such as: How can we learn about the spoken dialect from the written forms? What methodologies are best used? and more. Finally, Hary (1992; 2009a) treat multiple issues discussed above and analyse Judaeo-Arabic texts, including *shurūḥ*.

I wish to thank Aaron Hornkohl for his insightful comments and meticulous editing and the two readers for their helpful comments.

essay to my friend and colleague, Geoffrey Khan, in honour of his retirement. I am grateful to Geoffrey for his enormous contribution to our field in general and to my own work in particular.

1.0. Judaeo-Arabic

Judaeo-Arabic is a religiolect (Hary 2011) that has been spoken and written in various forms by Jews throughout the Arabic-speaking world. A religiolect is a language variety used by a religious community with its own history and development. In the Jewish context, it is a spoken and/or written variety employed by the Jewish population of a specific area, although it later may also extend to other communities and areas. There are several phases and layers in the development of Judaeo-Arabic (Hary 2018, 41–43 and the references there). Its recent period, *Contemporary Judaeo-Arabic*, is characterised, among other things, by the development of several dialectal centres around the Arab Jewish world. Thus, there arose EJA, Iraqi Judaeo-Arabic, Maghrebi Judaeo-Arabic (with its multiple variants), Syrian Judaeo-Arabic, Yemenite Judaeo-Arabic, and more, each with its own local flavour.

2.0. The History of Research on Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic

Nada Tomiche (1968) was the first to document Egyptian Jewish speech, highlighting several spoken features, distinguishing them from Christian and Muslim Egyptian Arabic in terms of phonetics, morphology, and lexicon. Haim Blanc followed suit, laying the foundations for research on EJA in three important articles (see above).

Although Blanc argued in 1979 that the dialect spoken by Cairene Jews is not distinct from that spoken by Christians and Muslims in Cairo, it is clear today that we can view EJA differently.² First, research on Jewish language varieties has advanced significantly and we can view the varieties today not in absolute terms, but rather in terms of distinctiveness, on a continuum from most to least similar to the dominant dialect, and more. Second, we have collected further data that show the distinctiveness in EJA and can thus detect the characteristics of the dialect. Indeed, with interviews and recordings of contemporary Egyptian Jews conducted by Gabriel Rosenbaum (see references above) and my own collection and publication of EJA material, including *shurūh*,³ there are now ample data

² I appreciate the alternative view in Connolly (2023). However, I have always insisted that in addition to the sociolinguistic variable of religion in Judaeo-Arabic (and other Jewish religiolects), there are other important variables, such as migration. In the case of EJA /fu'ul/ there is certainly no relying only on Standard Egyptian Arabic in assessing EJA; I referred to this feature in Standard Egyptian Arabic in previous periods and offered various explanations. In no way do we, in the field of Jewish language varieties, claim that the preference for the vowel /u/ in EJA is inherently 'Jewish'. This preference indicates the desire of the members of the community to distinguish themselves from their surroundings, whether in celebration of their identity or to protect themselves from influences from outside the community, or all the above simultaneously. The notion of distinctive linguistic features is common to many minorities and communities that feel external threat, whether real or perceived.

³ On *shurūh* specifically, see Hary (2009a). Many Jewish religiolects share a special literary genre, verbatim translations of sacred religious

to trace the development of EJA from the sixteenth century until today. For this paper, in addition to my own recordings, I use data from six manuscripts of EJA *shurūḥ*: Genesis⁴; Esther⁵; and the Passover *Haggada*.⁶ These *shurūḥ* reflect many dialectal features, which

and liturgical Hebrew/Aramaic texts (*sharḥ*, PL *shurūḥ*, in Judaeo-Arabic; *sharʿ* or *sharḥ* in Judaeo-Neo-Aramaic; *tavṣili* in Judaeo-Georgian; *tefila* in Judaeo-Italian; *tamsir* in Jewish Malayalam; *ladino* in Judaeo-Spanish; *taytsh* in Yiddish; etc.). The translated texts include the Hebrew Bible, Midrashic literature, *Pirke Avot* 'Ethics of the Patriarchs' (a tractate of moral and religious teachings from the Second Temple Period and the first centuries of the Common Era), the Passover *Haggada*, the *Siddur* 'prayer book', the Talmud, and more.

⁴ Ms. HB 15 (= CAJS Rare ms. 255) is located at the library of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. It is written on approximately 7½-inch-by-5½-inch paper with hard binding. The manuscript is untitled and has no colophon, but it is an Egyptian *sharḥ* of the Torah, including *Haftarot*, copied in nineteenth-century in Cairo. It comprises 192 sheets, each divided into two pages (folios). Each folio contains a *custodis* and (usually) twenty lines of text. The manuscript is written in oriental cursive script in elegant writing with calligraphic tendencies. The manuscript's condition is excellent, except for a few water spots. Several sections of the Torah as well as some *Haftarot* are missing. For this study I use mainly the *sharḥ* of Genesis.

⁵ Ms. 1302, located at the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, is an eighteenth-century EJA *sharḥ* of Esther. The manuscript consists of 13 folios; the translation of Est. 9.7–9, 25–32; 10 are missing. The script is oriental cursive with a few ligatures.

⁶ Mss 3; 74; 91; and 93 are all from the Cairo Collection (Hary 2010), located at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The manuscripts are excellent photocopies of the originals, which are in an unknown place

confirm several of the discoveries made by Tomiche, all of Blanc's, which he termed "non-standard Cairene," as well as Rosenbaum's. In this respect, I agree with Rosenbaum, who claimed (2002b, 118) that Blanc would have been convinced that the term 'Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic' is justified, had he seen the new materials. In sum, it has been a productive exercise to collect data on EJA through both written and spoken sources and to confirm each source with the others.

3.0. Linguistic Features of Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic

3.1. Phonetics and Phonology

In general, the phonological system of EJA is close to that of Standard Egyptian Arabic (SEA). There are, however, some differences that mark Jewish speech. Many of the differences are a result of foreign elements that made their way into EJA (from Hebrew and European languages) as a result of, among other factors, Jewish migration.

3.1.1. Vowels

The EJA vowel system shows significant variations from SEA. EJA demonstrates a clear preference for the vowel /u/ in all parts of speech, shifting to /u/ from /a/ and /i/.⁷ This preference for

in Cairo, Egypt. They are in good shape (especially ms. 3, which is the basis for the critical edition of the EJA Passover *Haggada*) and are probably from the nineteenth century.

⁷ Khan (1991, 226 fn. 10) noticed this phenomenon already in the early 1990s, but did not have extensive data to support his claim, which was

the vowel /u/ may also be seen in other Judaeo-Arabic dialects, for example, in northern Tunisian Judaeo-Arabic dialects (Henshke 2007, 52–53). This shift may be then considered a case of *migrated dialectalism*, where a phenomenon in a certain region, influenced by migration waves, exhibits a dialectal characteristic that is not common to that region (Hary 2009a, 22–23; Hary and Benor 2018, 674, 680).

The shift from /a/ > [u] occurs in nouns and adjectives: גּוֹצְבָךְ /ʔuɖbak/ ‘your anger’; שׁוֹעֵב /ʕuˈb/ ‘people’; אַחוֹר /āxur/ ‘another’; in verbs: תּוֹבָאֲרַךְ /tubārak/ ‘bless’; אוֹמוֹת /umūt/ ‘I die’; תּוֹקְעוּדוֹ /tuˈudu/ ‘you (PL) will settle’; and in pronouns and other parts of speech: לוֹכּוּם /lukum/ ‘to you (PL)’⁸

The shift /i/ (or /e/) > [u] occurs in nouns: קוֹצָה /ʔuɕʂa/ ‘story’; חוֹמָאֲרַ /ḥumār/ ‘donkeys’; /muʃt/ ‘comb’; /tuʃt/ ‘tub’; /muxadda/ ‘pillow’⁹; in verbs לְתַחְמוֹל /litaḥmul/ ‘so that you carry’; and in other parts of speech: דּוֹל וּוֹקֵת /dulwaˈt(i)/ ‘now’.¹⁰

The shift /Ø/ > /u/ exists but is not common: אַהוּל /ahul/ ‘people’.

subsequently furnished by Rosenbaum (2002a, 37). This feature is also documented in Middle Arabic texts written and copied by Christians.

⁸ /lukum/ appears also standard in Egyptian Arabic (Hinds and Badawi 1986, 775a), with the possibility of vowel harmony, thus not necessarily distinctive of EJA.

⁹ See Rosenbaum (2002a, 37; 2008, 249). Cf. SEA /meʃt/, /teʃt/, and /mexadda/, respectively.

¹⁰ The shift is either from SEA /i/ or from standard Arabic /a/: /hādhā/ > /da/ > /du/.

Moreover, variation between /u/ and /i/ exists in both EJA and SEA. However, speakers of EJA prefer to use /u/ while those of SEA prefer /i/. For example, Jews usually employ the vowel /u/ in the following nouns: כּוּזָאם /khuzām/ ‘nose ring’ and /šubbāk/ ‘window’, whereas users of SEA realise as /xizām/ and /šibbāk/, respectively, though sporadic pronunciation of /u/ in the latter does occur. More data from EJA can be found in the *Haggada*: the negation particle מוֹשׁ /muš/ appears quite frequently, whereas in SEA /muš/ and /miš/ coexist. Furthermore, what is especially interesting is that Jews employ the vowel /u/ even in cases where SEA calls for /i/ or /e/ and sometimes even /a/: מוֹשַׁעֲרָאנִי /muš‘arāni/ ‘hairy’ (versus SEA /miš‘arāni/); מוֹנַעֲמָאנִי /mun‘amāni/ ‘smooth’ (versus SEA /min‘amāni/); תּוֹרִיאַק /turyā/ ‘theriac (medicinal concoction)’ (versus SEA /tiryā/); עוֹרִיאָנָה /uryāna/ ‘naked’ (versus SEA /‘iryāna/); דּוֹל וּוּקַת /dulwa’t(i)/ ‘now’ (versus SEA /dilwa’t(i)/¹¹). In the SEA verbal system, the pattern /fi‘il/ has a (less common) pattern /fu‘ul/ variant. For example, /xiliṣ/ ‘be finished, was saved’ and /ti‘il/ ‘became heavy’ have the variants of /xuluṣ/ and /tu‘ul/, respectively. As seen above, also in the verbal system, speakers of EJA prefer /u/: כּוֹלוּץ /xuluṣ/ ‘was redeemed’; תּוֹקוּל /tu‘ul/ ‘became heavy’; and שׁוֹכַת /šuxt/ ‘I became old’, while those of SEA prefer /i/. Similarly, EJA exhibits תּוֹבָאֲרַךְ /tubārak/ ‘bless’ and תּוֹעָאֲלָה /tu‘āla/ ‘exalt’, contrasting with SEA /a/: /tabārak/ and /ta‘āla/, respectively.

¹¹ Behnstedt and Woidich (1985, 178–80) list about forty variants for /dilwa’ti/ ‘now’ in Egypt; however, only three rare forms contain the vowel /u/.

Another vowel shift in EJA is sensitive to phonetic environment: /ā/ > /a/ preceding /ʕ/, /ħ/, or /h/: בתע /bitaʕ/ ‘of (M), genitive marker’; אלהנא /ilahna/ ‘our God’.¹²

3.1.2. Consonants

EJA uses the voiceless bilabial stop /p/, often in words from Hebrew: אל פלגשים /il-pilaḡšim/ ‘the concubines’; פלדש /pildaš/ ‘Pildash (name)’; sometimes in variation with the equivalent Arabic voiced bilabial stop /b/ as in, פדן /padān/, which may alternate with בדאן /badān/.

The voiced velar stop /g/, which is a unique marker of SEA,¹³ is pronounced similarly in EJA: גיעאן /giʕān/ ‘hungry’ and גלוס /gulūs/ ‘sitting’; however, there is sometimes a shift to the voiced velar fricative /ɣ/, as in גולדה /ɣolda/ ‘Golda (name)’; /mayendavid/ ‘Star of David’, especially in words originating in Hebrew.

The Literary Arabic voiceless uvular stop /q/ has often shifted to the voiceless glottal stop /ʔ/ in both SEA and EJA, as in דול ווקת /dulwʔat(i)/ ‘now’ and פוקורת /fuʔurt/ ‘I became impoverished’. It is seldom reflected in the orthography: אסמה /ʔisma/ ‘share’. Evidence for this shift comes from several cases of hypercorrection: קסאוויר /ʔasāwir/ ‘wristbands’.

¹² Of course, alternative phonological explanations can be given here as well: pre-stress vowel shortening in /bitaʕ/ and shortening of long vowels before two consonants in /ilahna/ (Hary 2009a; 2017).

¹³ In many other Arabic dialects as well as in Literary Arabic this consonant is pronounced as either the voiced alveopalatal affricate /dʒ/ or the voiced alveopalatal fricative /ʒ/.

Sometimes /q/ shifts to /ç/: גִּצְרוּ /çidru/ ‘were able’.

The voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/ exhibits weakening in EJA: אַתְנָאֶשֶׁר /itnaaʃar/ ‘twelve’;¹⁴ אַהֲד /ahd/ ‘pact’. This phenomenon occurs in other Judaeo-Arabic dialects, for example, in the Judaeo-Arabic dialect of Haifa (Geva-Kleinberger 2004, 43), of Peqiʿin (Geva-Kleinberger 2005, 47), and of Tiberias (Geva-Kleinberger 2009, 9), and is not uncommon in Semitic languages in general.

Some other phonemes in EJA follow those of SEA, for example: the disappearance of *hamza*: בִּיר /bīr/ ‘well’, מֵרָה /mara/ ‘wife’; the shift of the interdentalals to stops and fricatives: /θ/ > /t/, as in תַּעֲבָאן /taʕbān/ ‘snake’, and /θ/ > /s/, as in אַוֹרֶסֶת /ʔawrəst/ ‘you bequeathed an inheritance’, and /ð/ > /d/, as in נֵבִיד /nəbīd/ ‘wine’, and /ð/ > /z/, as in זָאָתוּ /zāto/ ‘himself’.

3.1.3. Phonological Processes

Velarisation (*tafxīm*) occurs quite frequently, usually in the vicinity of other velarised phonemes. This velarisation is common also in SEA and in other Arabic dialects: /t/ > /t̤/, e.g., צוֹטְנָה /sōt̤na/ ‘our voice’; /s/ > /s̤/, e.g., אַצְרָאֵר /ʔaʃrāʔ/ ‘secrets’; /z/ > /z̤/, e.g., אֵלִיעֶזֶר /eliʕez̤er/ and עֵזְרִיָּה /ʕaz̤arya/, which can alternate with non-emphatic /z/, e.g., אֵלִיעֶזֶר /eliʕez̤er/ and עֵזְרִיָּה /ʕaz̤arya/; and /d/ > /d̤/, e.g., קוֹצָאֵךְ /ʔuʃʃād̤/ ‘in front’.

¹⁴ This phenomenon is also well attested in SEA, but less frequently. Also, loss of /ʕ/ in the cardinal numbers twelve–nineteen occurs in northern Egypt (Benstedt and Woidich 1985, map 370), as well as in other locales in North Africa.

On the other hand, loss of velarisation or de-emphatisation (*tarqīq*) may also occur: /ṭ/ > /t/, e.g., תארת /tārit/ ‘she fled’ (from طارت); /ṣ/ > /s/, e.g., סדון /sidōn/ ‘Sidon’; and /ḏ/ > /d/, e.g., דיקה /dī’a/ ‘anguish’.

Another process is the nasal shift from bilabial /m/ to alveolar /n/:¹⁵ /ṭu‘ān/ ‘food, bread’ (> /ṭu‘ām/) and /fahīn/ (> /fahīm/) ‘intelligent’.

At times, the shifts have become complex: /θ/ > /s/ > /ṣ/, צור /ṣōr/ ‘ox’, where the interdental fricative /θ/ became alveolar /s/—as is common in urban dialects when an affiliation with Classical Arabic is desired (Hary 2009a, 104, 1.4)—and then underwent velarisation (/s/ > [ṣ]) in the environment of emphatic [r]. A similar process has occurred in טור /toṛ/ ‘ox’ (Hary 2009a, 111, 1.16.1) and in אבצורהום /abḏuṛhum/ ‘I will scatter them’ with /ḏ/ > /d/ > /ḏ/, where the interdental fricative /ḏ/ became a stop /d/, as is common in urban dialects, then underwent velarisation (/d/ > [ḏ]) in the environment of emphatic [r].

3.2. Morphology and Syntax

As is seen above in the phonetics and the phonology, in general, the morphological and syntactic systems of EJA are close to those of SEA; however, some distinctiveness is seen.

3.2.1. The Noun System

The following are some of the features of the noun system in EJA.

¹⁵ Note that this is not uncommon also in rural Egyptian dialects: /furn/ ~ /furm/ ‘oven’ and /banzīn/ ~ /banzīm/ ‘gasoline’. This shift and its opposite occur elsewhere in SEA: /ganb/ ~ /gamb/ ‘side’.

The feminine ending in EJA uses an alternative morpheme in the first term of an *idāfa*, /-it/ or /-ət/: ארבעת סאעאט /arba'itsa'āt/ 'four hours'; סרביית אל פוקרה /sarxiyyət il-fu'ara/ 'the cry of the poor'.

The Arabic plural morpheme may be used with words borrowed from the Hebrew: עארליין /'ārelyīn/ 'Christians', as the Hebrew origin noun ערל 'uncircumcised man' takes the Arabic plural morpheme /-īn/. At times, however, a Hebrew word is transferred 'as is' into the Judaeo-Arabic text along with its Hebrew plural morpheme. This occurs with the masculine plural morpheme /-īm/: פלשתים 'Philistines'; דינים פסח 'the laws of Passover'; אל-מצריים /il-mašriyīm/ 'the Egyptians', although in the latter case there is alternation with אל מצרואה /il-məṣarwa/ (unique to EJA). The feminine plural morpheme /-ōt/ may also be retained: מצוות /miṣwōt/ 'commandments'; מצות שמורות 'guarded *matzas*'.

3.2.2. The Verbal System

The verbal pattern /fu'ul/, so typical in later EJA texts, is also common in the spoken dialect. As mentioned in Hary (1992, 280–85; 2009a, 117), this pattern usually indicates intransitive verbs with 'low grade' control and nowadays is often equivalent to the /fi'il/ pattern in standard colloquial Egyptian: שוכח /šuxt/ 'I became old'; כותורתי /kuturti/ 'you (FS) increased'; and פוקורתי /fu'urt/ 'I became impoverished'.¹⁶ The pattern also reflects an archaic Egyptian Arabic form.

¹⁶ In standard colloquial Egyptian we find /šixt/ 'I became old'; /kitirti/ 'you (FS) increased'; and /fi'irt/ 'I became impoverished'; the /fu'ul/ forms are rarer today, indicating archaic forms.

Furthermore, the pattern /fi'il/ found in the standard dialect appears in EJA as well: מיסכת /miskit/ 'she caught'; גרי /giri/ and גריית /giryit/ 'he/she ran'; ביכי /biki/¹⁷ 'he cried'; and כטיו /xityu/ 'they sinned'.

Use of the N-dialect imperfect form *nékteb-nektébu* (for the first singular and plural imperfect forms) is quite frequent in EJA, as first documented by Blanc:¹⁸ אנה נערפ /ana ni'raf/ 'I know'; and נישכורוק /niškúruk/ 'we thank you'; נגמסו /niymísu/ 'we dip'; and נאכלו /naklu/ 'we eat'. Rosenbaum mentions /ana ḥanəzəl/ 'I will go down' (as opposed to SEA /ḥanzəl/) and /nektébu bəraši/ 'we write in Rashi script' (SEA /nekteb/) (Rosenbaum 2008, 248).

The verb *come* in both SEA and in written EJA features some forms that are characteristic also of the standard dialect: גית /gēt/ 'I came'; גיה /geh/ and גה /gah/ 'he came'; גינה /gēna/ 'we came' and גיתום/גיתו /gētu (M)/ 'you (PL) came'. EJA, however, reveals additional forms: ג /ge/ and אגה /ega/ 'he came' (conjugated also in other pronouns); גאתת /gātət/ or /gātit/ 'she came' (in SEA /gat/); גו /gu/ and אגו /egu/ 'they came' (in SEA /gum/) (Blanc 1974, 215). Furthermore, the verb *go* also features a special form in EJA: אראח /aṛāḥ/ 'he went' (also

¹⁷ Nowadays /baka/ is the form in use (Hinds and Badawi 1986, 94b), though, in the nineteenth century, /biki/ was employed (Spitta 1980, 232).

¹⁸ This use is typical to western Arabic dialects west of Egypt (including Alexandria), as opposed to eastern Arabic dialects, which use *akteb-nekteb*. In Cairo, only Jews used the feature of *nékteb-nektébu*; in other words, most other language communities in Cairo employed *akteb-nekteb*.

‘deceased’).¹⁹ In addition, the ‘long’ forms of *eat* and *take* occur frequently in EJA: אכלתו /akaltu/ ‘you (PL) ate’; אכדו /axadu/ ‘they took’. As in SEA, the verbal pattern *itfa‘al* appears very frequently in EJA: אתבהלו /itbahálu/ ‘they were overwhelmed’; אתכבר /itxabar/ ‘it was related’; and אתצלמת /itḏallimt/ ‘it became dark’. Finally, in EJA, geminate verbal forms became defective, as in גשייתי /ḡššētni/ ‘you deceived me’, which is typical of other modern Arabic dialects as well.

3.2.3. The Pronoun System

EJA exhibits several variant pronominal forms:

The third plural independent pronoun may appear as הומן /humman/ ‘they’, against SEA /humma/; however, /-n/ extension for pronouns exists in the Eastern Delta in the pronoun /huwwan/ ‘they’ (Behnstedt and Woidich 1985, map 149).

The masculine singular demonstrative pronoun has a variant of /dih/ (or /deh/), for example, דיה אל באב /dih l-bāb/ ‘this is the gate’.

The plural demonstrative pronoun /dōli/ (also in SEA, Hinds and Badawi 1986, 273a) and /hadōli/²⁰ occur quite frequently: אל רוגאלה הדולי /il-rugāla hadōli/ ‘these people’; אל אראצי /il-arāḏi hadōli/ ‘these lands’, usually following the noun as modifiers. When the plural demonstrative pronoun appears before the noun as a subject, usually SEA /dōli/ appears: דולי אל

¹⁹ This can also be explained by the tendency to use form IV verbs with form I meaning. See Blau (1999) and Hary (1992).

²⁰ /hadōli/ is especially interesting, since demonstrative pronouns with /ha-/ are unknown in Egyptian sedentary dialects.

דולי אסאמי אוולאד /dōli l-šalaṭīn/ ‘these are the rulers’; and דולי אסאמי אוולאד /dōli ‘asāmi ‘awlād išma‘īl/ ‘these are the names of Ishmael’s children’, although not always: הדולי אוולאד קטורה /hadōli ‘awlād qəṭūra/ ‘all of these are the children of Ketura’. Other variants of the plural demonstrative pronoun in EJA are /don/ and /doni/ (Rosenbaum 2008, 249).

There are also interrogative pronouns that are common in EJA and not in SEA: איש /ēš/²¹ ‘what’; קד איש /‘addēš/ ‘how much?’; ליש /lēš/ ‘why?’; and כיפ /kēf/ ‘how?’. These interrogative pronouns are preposed in the sentence (rather than postposed, as in SEA): איש דה אסתעגולת /ēš da ista‘galt/ ‘what is this that you hurried?’ קד איש פעייל טייבין /‘addēš fa‘āyil ṭaybīn/ ‘how many good deeds?’ /ēš ‘āyez/ ‘what do you want?’.

The genitive marker pronouns in EJA are not always conjugated as in SEA. For example, the masculine singular genitive marker /bitā‘/ may have been quite frequently frozen in use, especially in written EJA: כל צרבה וצרבה... כאנת בתאע כמס צרבאט ‘each plague (F)... was of (M) five plagues’; יאכודו אל מצא בתאע ‘(the participants) hold the *matza* (F) of (M) the *afikoman*’. The feminine form, though, may appear in written texts (but not the plural form/bitū‘/): יכדו נוס אל פטירה בתאעית אל פקומין ‘(the participants) take half of the *matza* of the *afikoman*’.

²¹ However, there is evidence in modern Cairene that there must have been an earlier /ēš/, mainly in phrases and proverbs; for example, /izzayyak/ < */ēš zayyak/ ‘how are you?’. Furthermore, /ēš/ seems to be more common in older texts and occurs in fairy tales, for example, as in /ēš tuṭlub/. It is typical of EJA (as well as of other Jewish religious) to preserve archaic forms.

Demonstrative pronouns usually follow the nouns to which they refer, much like in SEA: אל כללם הדולי 'these words'. This word order occurs also when a classical form is used in written EJA as a variant: אל יום האדה 'this day'.

3.2.4. The Number System

Archaic numerical forms appear in EJA, as is typical of other Jewish religiolects (Hary 2009a, 23–24): אורבוע מאית /urbu'miyya/ 'four hundred'.²² As seen above, this feature is also in line with the characteristic phonological preference in EJA for the vowel /u/. There are other number forms used in EJA that correspond to the phonological characteristics mentioned above; for example, the weakening of the voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕ/, as in אתנאשר /itnaašar/ 'twelve' or the shift of the interdental stops as in אתנין /itnēn/ 'two'; however, the latter is not a distinct feature of EJA. It is also common in standard Cairene and in many sedentary dialects all over the Arab world. In addition, the number /itnēn/ 'two' may accompany the counted noun, as in אתנין שעוב /itnēn šu'ūb/ 'two nations,' thus replacing the dual form. Moreover, the counted noun following the numbers may be in the plural: תמנמאיה ותלתין סנין /tmanmiyya wi-talatīn sinīn/ 'eight hundred and thirty years', although there are counter examples in the corpus following standard Classical Arabic use: סתין סנה /sitīn sana/ 'sixty years'.

²² This form is currently employed also in Upper Egypt, on the west bank of Luxor, in B'ēri.

3.2.5. Adverbs

EJA employs SEA forms such as הנאך /hənāk/ ‘there’; קווי /ʔawi/ ‘very’ or כדה /kəda/ ‘so, thus’. However, it uses the unique variant כמאנה /kamāna/ ‘also’ (in addition to the standard כמאן /kamān/).

3.2.6. The Definite Article

At times the definite article may drop from the noun in a noun-adjective phrase: פי יד אל שדידה ופי יד אל ממדודה ‘with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm’ (Hary 1992, 30–33; 2009a, 125, 268–69).

3.2.7. Negation

EJA exhibits similar characteristics to SEA, such as the use of /ma...š/ to negate both the imperfect and the perfect, as is the case in SEA: מא יקולש /mayəʔulš/ ‘he does not say’; מחביש /maḥabbēš/ ‘he did not want’. Moreover, the participle is regularly negated by /muš/.

However, EJA also exhibits unique use of the negation particle לם /lam/, which is used extensively in writing (Rosenbaum 2002c; Hary 2009a, 94–95, 126–27, 141–43, 214–19) with perfect verbs: לם מדו /lam maddu/ ‘they did not stretch’; לם וקפ /lam wiʔif/ ‘he did not withstand’. The issue whether the use of /lam/ followed by the perfect spread widely into the speech of Egyptian Jews had not yet been settled (Rosenbaum 2002c, 588ff; Hary 2009a, 126, 3.3.3).

The particle /lam/ is also commonly employed with imperfect verbs: *וְלֹם נִינְכְסֵפְ* /wi-lam ninkésəf/ 'and I will not be ashamed'; *וְלֹם יִתְגַּיֵּיר* /wi-lam yitgəyyir/ 'and it will not change'.

In addition, the particle also appears in unexpected contexts; for example, with nouns: *אֲנָא הוּא וְלֹם אֲכֹר* /ana huwwa wi-lam āxur/ 'I (and) not someone else'; with pronouns: *לִי וְלֹם לוֹ* /li wi-lam lo/ 'to me and not to him'; and even with prepositions: *וְלֹם עֲלֵה יָד מוֹחֶרֶק* /wi-lam 'ala yad muḥra/ 'and not through a seraph'; as well as in isolation *וְאִנְכְּאֵן לֹם וְחִיַּאת פֶּרְעֹן אֵן גִּסְסִין אַנְתּוֹם* 'and if not, by Pharaoh's life, you are indeed spies'; *וְקֹאֵלוֹ אֵלֶיהָ לֹם* 'And they told him, "No, Sir"'.¹

3.2.8. Agreement

EJA exhibits agreement characteristics similar to those of SEA, in line with many other Arabic dialects.

Verb agreement in number: it is not uncommon in Arabic dialects in general for verbs preceding their subjects to agree in number. For example, the following plural verb (אתכצמו) precedes its plural subject (רועיאן): *וְאִתְכְּצֻמוּ רֹעִיָאן גֵּרָאֵר* /wi-txaşmu ru'yān gəṛār/ 'and the herdsmen of Gerar fought'; this occurs with inanimate subjects as well: *וְכֹאֲנֵן כּוֹל אֵיָאֵם מִתּוֹשֶׁלַח* /wi-kānu kull ayyām metušeləḥ/ 'and all Metushelah's days were...'.²

Verb agreement in gender: the gender of plural verbs (including participles) is usually masculine, even when the verbs refer to feminine subjects: *וּבִנְיָת אֵהֵל אֵל בֵּלַד כְּאֶרְגִּין לִימְלוֹ מִיָּה* 'and the townsmen's daughters come out (MPL) to draw (MPL) water'.

Noun agreement: masculine plural adjectives modify non-human plural nouns even if they are feminine: *אֵל בִּקְרָאֵת*

חוסנין אל מנטר ואל סומאן 'good looking (MPL) and sturdy (MPL) cows (FPL).²³

Pronoun agreement in number: as is common in other dialects, dual agreement is lost: הום מוסה והרון '(who) they are Moses and Aaron'.

Pronoun agreement in gender: the gender of plural suffixed pronouns is masculine, even if they refer to feminine nouns: האפֿט אל נסא וינעטא זואקהום 'the keeper of the women; and let them be provided with their (MPL) cosmetics'. In the following sentence אן טייבין הומן 'for good looking (MPL) they (M) are', the gender of both the pronoun (הומן) and the plural adjective (טייבין) is masculine, although they refer to the feminine noun phrase אל בנאת אל אנסאן 'the men's daughters'.

Finally, as expected, asyndetic embedded clauses are common in EJA: מוש ראיחין יתעשו /muš rayḥin yit'aššu/ 'they are not going to eat'.

3.3. The Lexicon

The corpus shows many lexical items which are common in SEA, but some are unique to EJA.

²³ The corpus sometimes shows agreement, as in בקראת חוסנאת אל מנטר 'good looking (FPL) and sturdy (FPL) cows (FPL)'. However, this example does not necessarily represent colloquial use, but rather a verbatim translation of the Biblical Hebrew original (see Hary 2009a, 284–85, 10-3.13).

3.3.1. Prepositions

The following are regularly used in SEA as well: קודאמך 'in front of you'; /zay/ 'as', as in זאי מא קאל 'as it is said'. However, EJA uses חדאיה /ḥadāya/ or ḥidāya/ to render Hebrew אצלי 'with me'.²⁴

3.3.2. Adverbs

The following EJA adverbs are regularly used in SEA as well:

- Spatial adverbs: הנא /hena/ 'here'; הנאך /henāk/ 'there'.
- Temporal adverbs: דול ווקת /dulwa't(i)/, reflecting the preference for the vowel /u/, though in alternation with SEA /dilwa't(i)/ 'now'.
- Manner adverbs: SEA קווי /'awi/ 'very'; בדה /kəda/ 'so, thus'; and כמאן /kamān/ 'also' are common, but so, too, is the EJA variant כמאנה /kamāna/, as in: שעב אל אלה וכמאנה /wi-kamāna ila š-ša'b/ 'and also that nation' (Blanc 1974, 217; Rosenbaum 2002a, 38; Hary 2009a, 131).
- Other adverbs: יארית /yarēt/ 'let it be', as in וקאל לבאן 'And Laban said, let it be according to your words'.

3.3.3. Verbs

- There are some typical SEA verbs like /ga/ 'come'; EJA is distinguished with its special forms; for example, /gu/ 'they came'; the longer forms /akal/ 'eat', including its

²⁴ Note that the Egyptian Sa'īdī dialect uses this preposition, /ḥidāya/ 'with me' (Behnstedt and Woidich 1994, 4, 81; Hary 2009a, 131, §4.1).

participle ואכלין /waklīn/ ‘have eaten (PL)’ and /axad/ ‘take’; /rāḥ/ and /arāḥ/ ‘go’.

- Infrequent in SEA: דחצרו /daḥaru/ ‘they caused to roll down’ (Hinds and Badawi 1986, 279); כרשני /karašni/ ‘he drove me away’ and זכית /zakēt/ ‘I gained’.
- Some EJA verbs exhibit a meaning different from in SEA: אתעשמו /it‘aššimu/ ‘trust in’.

3.3.4. Nouns

- Both תוקל /tu‘l/ ‘heaviness, weight’ and כוזאם /xuzām/ ‘nose ring’ appear in EJA, demonstrating the preference for the vowel /u/.
- Some EJA nouns exhibit a meaning different from in SEA: פדו /fadw/ ‘redemption; liberation’ (Hinds and Badawi 1986, 279); דופעה /duf‘a/ ‘stumbling’.

3.3.5. Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon in EJA

Jewish language varieties, in general, and Judaeo-Arabic, in particular, have always been in touch with Hebrew and Aramaic, the ‘sacred’ languages of Jewish communities throughout the ages. Hence, many Hebrew and Aramaic elements entered these religiolects through the contact. Because of length limitations, I will not be able to analyse these elements in EJA. However, these elements appear frequently in the lexicon.

They are found mainly in the religious domain, in proper nouns and in food items, but also in other domains. For example, in proper names: האגר ‘Hagar’, יצחק ‘Isaac’; in the place names:

ברק 'Bnei Braq', ירושלים 'Jerusalem'; in liturgical and religious terms: חופה /ḥuppa/ 'marriage'; גפין /gefēn/ 'vine'; ספר /sefer/ 'scroll, religious book'; מילה /milla/ 'circumcision'; בראכה /bərāxa/ 'blessing'; כרפץ /karfaṣ/ 'Karpas, greens for the Passover Seder'; in time terms, עיריב /'ērēb/ 'evening'; שבאט /šabbāt/ 'Saturday, Shabbat'; אדר /adar/ '(The month of) Adar'; ניסאן /nisān/ '(the month of) Nisan'; חול /ḥōl/ (or /ḥol/) 'a week day'; and in other domains: אל פלגשים 'the concubines'.

Moreover, jewellers in Egypt (Jews as well as Christians and Muslims) have been using the adjective /yāfet/ 'good' and the verb /yaffet/ 'treat customers nicely', probably derived from Hebrew יפה 'nice'. They also use /šall/ 'at, genitive marker', probably derived from Hebrew של 'genitive marker' (Rosenbaum, 2002d). In addition, the verb /'etdardem/ or /'ddardem/ 'fall asleep' is derived from Hebrew נרדם with the same meaning. Thus, the lexemes tend, for the most part, to be fully incorporated into EJA. In other words, Hebrew יפה and נרדם take the grammatical features of the borrowing (or target) language (Arabic), in this case the verbal patterns /fa^ʿal/ and /itfa^ʿal/, respectively.²⁵

²⁵ This has been the case throughout the history of Judaeo-Arabic. Blau (1999, 134) reports that in Classical Judaeo-Arabic, we find אצדר /aṣḏar/ 'arrange (a prayer)' from Hebrew הסדיר (תפילה), adapting phonologically into the Arabic structure, using the phonological process of emphasisation (/tafxīm/). The same is true morphosyntactically, as in, for example, the use of the appropriate feminine singular form, which refers to the non-human plural noun פירות in the following: אן כאנת תלך 'if these fruits have not reached the stage of one-third of maturity' (Blau 1999, 136). Similarly, Hebrew verbs in *hitpa^ʿel* are transferred into the equivalent Arabic /tafa^ʿala/ pattern: תאבל

At times, and especially in written EJA, Hebrew components were not fully integrated²⁶ and kept, for example, some Hebrew structural features producing calque translations.²⁷ This occurred mostly in EJA *shurūh* texts because of the *sharḥan*'s desire to translate the sacred text verbatim. And sometimes because of his poor understanding of the text, many calque translations found their way into the *sharḥ*.

Furthermore, the *sharḥanim* wished to retain the Hebrew 'spirit' in their *shurūh*. In such translations, each Hebrew (or Aramaic) word was replaced with an equivalent in the target language (Judaean-Arabic) and individual morphemes of the guest language (Hebrew or Aramaic) were also translated. The result usually cannot be understood in the host language without adequate knowledge of the original text.

Calque translations in EJA are common in proper names and place names, for example, מְגֵאֶרֶת אֵל מִתְנִיָּה 'the cave of the double' is a literal translation of מערת המכפלה (Gen. 25.9). As noted above, in calque translation, morphemes (or perceived

/ta'abbal/ 'mourn' (from Hebrew התאבל) and /tašammad/ 'apostatise' (from Hebrew השתמד, Blau 1999, 138), in order to be integrated into the Arabic verbal morphological structure. See Hary (2018, 52).

²⁶ As was also the case in Classical Judaean-Arabic. For example, the loanword גַּיִיר /gayyar/ 'make a proselyte' or אִתְגַּיִיר/תְּגַיִיר /itgayyar/-/tagayyar/ 'become a proselyte', although morphologically adapted into the Arabic verbal patterns, phonetically kept the Hebrew /g/ phoneme (Blau 1999, 134–35).

²⁷ Calque or loan translations and doublets appear in all Jewish religiolects. For example, in Jewish English, *may her memory be for a blessing* (from זיכרונה לברכה) and *the world to come* (from העולם הבא).

morphemes) may also be translated verbatim. For example, כאשר 'when, where, as,' is analysed by the *sharḥan* as consisting of two morphemes: כ- and אשר, thus the conjunction is translated verbatim into EJA, also with the two attached morphemes, /ka-/ and /allaḏī/, resulting in כאלדי or even אלדי 'when'.

In other cases, the *sharḥan* was not very proficient in the original text in Hebrew and, therefore, his calque translation might have resulted from misinterpretation: אני עניתי מאוד 'I am greatly afflicted' (Passover *Haggada*), is translated erroneously as אנא גאוובת קווי 'I greatly answered'. The Hebrew verb עניתי stems from the root 'n-y, which can mean both 'poor' and 'answer'. The *sharḥan* chose the second meaning and arrived at this bizarre calque translation.²⁸

4.0. Summary

To conclude, EJA has developed throughout the centuries as a Jewish language variety within its surrounding Arabic in accordance with the development and history of other Jewish religiolects. Consequently, EJA has become to be another Judaeo-Arabic language variety in the Arab Jewish world. All of this indicates the importance of the research on Judaeo-Arabic. On the one hand this research contributes to our understanding of Jewish language varieties all over the world, the connection between

²⁸ Similarly, in Tunisian Judaeo-Arabic, the oath /w-aḏoṇay/ is a clear translation of the Arabic /wə-lḷa/ and the phrase /'nd-u l-lašun/ 'he has the tongue' (lit.) is the calque translation of Tunisian /'nd-u l-lšan/ 'he speaks a clear rich language' (Henshke 2007, 123–24).

Language and Religion ('religiolinguistics'), the triglossic situation of Jews in the Diaspora (local language, local language with Jewish markers, sacred language [Hebrew; Aramaic]), implications for other religious-influenced language varieties (Christian language varieties [e.g., Christianese; Maltese] or Muslim language varieties [e.g., Aljamiado; Persian], and more. At the same time, this research is essential in understanding the development of the Arabic language including its dialects, the development of Arabic religiolects, migratory dialects, and more. This analysis on language in the periphery is crucial to understanding the centre and here lies the importance of the research on Judaeo-Arabic.

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THE ARABIC COUNTERPART OF THE BYZANTINE KARAITE TREATISE *MARPE LA-‘AŞEM**

Gregor Schwarb

This contribution introduces the primary Arabic model underlying *Sefer Marpe la-‘Ašem*, a well-known eleventh-century Byzantine Hebrew manual on the fundamentals of the Jewish Faith according to the doctrine of the Baṣran Mu‘tazila, which at the time was a major strand of both Islamic and Jewish thought. It is part of a comprehensive study of Byzantine Karaite Hebrew translations from Arabic and adaptations of Arabic compositions, which has long been understood to be a major desideratum in the field. Measured against the significant amount of scholarship devoted to Arabic-into-Hebrew translations produced in a western European context,¹ the Hebrew translations of ‘the Byzantine Karaite Literary Project’ (Ankori 1957, 424–52) have not been accorded

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¹ See, for instance, the bibliographical survey of the PESHAT project at <https://www.peshat.org/nav?path=left.bibliography>; Leicht and Veltri (2019).

commensurate attention in spite of their obvious historico-linguistic and historico-cultural significance.²

The conditions to undertake such a study have never been more opportune than now. The ongoing reconstruction and critical edition of Arabic compositions produced by scholars associated with the Karaite Compound of Learning (*dār al-ʿilm*) in Jerusalem provide a necessary condition for study of the Byzantine Hebrew translations alongside their Arabic source texts. Other preliminary tasks of a comprehensive study include:

- (1) A renewed thorough overview of the corpus of Byzantine Hebrew texts that were translated or adapted from Arabic source texts – Judging by the updated English translation (2013) of Steinschneider’s *Die hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters* (1893), our current state of knowledge has been only marginally extended over the course of the last century (compare Steinschneider 1893, 449–61, §§263–73, with Steinschneider 2013, 183–200, §§263–73). The update of the section on Karaite Hebrew translations (§§263–73) is essentially limited to the listing of additional manuscripts harvested from the catalogue of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. Most of these manuscripts have by now been digitised and are conveniently accessible online.

² Ankori (1957) remains the most exhaustive history of early Byzantine Karaite Hebrew literature and Maman (1979) is still the most detailed linguistic description of an early Byzantine Karaite Arabic-into-Hebrew translation.

- (2) The preparation of critical editions of the Hebrew translations and adaptations – At present, the majority of these texts are merely available as transcripts of single manuscripts and/or substandard uncritical editions (see Lasker et al. 2019, 11 fn. 38).³ Only critically edited Hebrew translations can be used as indirect textual witnesses assisting the reconstruction and edition of the underlying Arabic source texts. They will also facilitate the analysis of the numerous Greek glosses inserted into the Hebrew translations which can now also benefit from significant advancements made in the realm of Byzantine Greek lexicography (Rodríguez Adrados 1980– ; Trapp 1994–2017; Lasker et al. 2019, 20, 708–41).
- (3) At a rough estimate, the corpus of Karaite Hebrew translations and adaptations of Arabic texts comprises one and a half million words. About half of this corpus has thus far been reconstructed in synoptic draft editions.⁴ They can be used to build aligned parallel

³ A substantial corpus of Byzantine Karaite Hebrew texts is included in the Historical Dictionary Project of the Academy of the Hebrew Language in Jerusalem and freely accessible and searchable via the *Ma’agarim* database. The Karaite Hebrew translations published by Yosef al-Gamil (Ashdod: Tiḥeret Yosef Institute) are unfortunately riddled with typos, misreadings, and misinterpretations.

⁴ Synoptic draft editions of the Arabic source text and their Byzantine Hebrew translations/adaptations have been completed for Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s *Al-Kitāb al-Muḥṭawī*, *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, and parts of *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*, Yeshu‘a ben Yehuda’s *Risāla fī ‘l-Jawāb ‘an Masā’il Mushkila fī ‘l-Tarkīb*, *Tafsīr ‘Ašeret ha-Devarim al-Mashrūḥ*, *Tafsīr ‘Bereshit Rabba’*, and large

corpora and create a parallel concordance, which will serve as the starting point for a comprehensive lexicon of Karaite Arabic-into-Hebrew translations and the interspersed Judaeo-Greek glosses.⁵

The present article is intended to make a small contribution to task no. (1). It will be followed by studies of similar scope examining the Arabic source texts of other major Byzantine Hebrew compositions, such as Tobias ben Moses's *Sefer Oṣar Neḥmad* or Jacob ben Reuben's *Sefer ha-ʿOsher*.

1.0. *Sefer Marpe la-ʿAṣem* in Research History

Sefer Marpe la-ʿAṣem (< ‘Healing to the Bones’ [Prov. 16.24])⁶ is extant in at least seven manuscripts, which are described in the pertinent catalogues.⁷ Among European orientalists, the treatise

sections of Levi ben Yefet's *Sefer Mišvot*. The exact relationship between Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda's *Long Commentary on Leviticus* and Tobias ben Moses's *Oṣar Neḥmad* is currently being examined. The studies of Gaash (2015b; 2017a; 2017b; 2018; 2023) and Vidro (2011; 2013) have laid the ground for a synoptic alignment of *Meʾor ʿAyyin* and *Kitāb al-ʿUqūd*.

⁵ See, in this context, the desideratum of “a study of the lexical scope, the application of words, and other linguistic aspects of the literary creations of Tobias ben Moses and his colleagues” invoked by Ankori (1957, 423 fn. 189).

⁶ As mentioned by Lasker et al. (2019, 11 fn. 36), it is possible that the author intended the title to be vocalised *Marpeʾ la-ʿEṣem*. In this article, we will use the Masoretic vocalisation of the pausal form, *Marpeʾ la-ʿAṣem*.

⁷ To the six manuscripts listed in Steinschneider (2013, 198ff, §272), one may add MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, B 430

was first mentioned by J. C. Wolf (1714), who reproduced the book list from Alphabet 100 of Judah Hadassi's *'Eshkol ha-Kofer* in his *Notitia Karaeorum*.

In scholarly literature, *Marpe la-‘Ašem* has routinely been referred to from the 1860s onwards. S. Pinsker (1860, 173) briefly mentioned the treatise in the appendix of his *Liqqūṭe Qadmoniyot*, and confidently ascribed it to Yeshu‘a ben Yehuda. J. Fürst (1865, 185–86) already took this attribution for granted. A. Neubauer (1866, 146, no. 686), who consulted MS St. Petersburg, RNL, Yevr. I 686 shortly after its acquisition by the Imperial Library in 1862, presumed the treatise to be “a Byzantine product” on account of its frequent Greek glosses. M. Steinschneider admitted to the possibility that the treatise was translated from Arabic (Steinschneider 1893, 460, §272; 1902, 93ff, §51.7). In 1921, S. Poznański (1921, 185, ln. 30, no. 15, with commentary on 187ff) published a seventeenth-century book-list from MS London, British Library, Add. 22,911, fols 470r–473r, which attributes the treatise to Yūsuf al-Baṣīr.⁸ According to J. Mann (1935, 290–1 fn. 10), the author

evidently belonged to the group of Byzantine disciples who studied under the eminent Karaite scholars of Jerusalem in the eleventh century. Perhaps the author should be identified with Tobias b. Moses.... It reads not as a translation from the Arabic but as an original composition. Hence the

(Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts [IMHM] F 53611), fols 103r–132r.

⁸ For a description of MS London, British Library, Add. 22,911/III, see Margoliouth (1909, 436, no. 1062/III).

Greek expressions therein prove that the author cannot be identical with Abū'l Faraj Furkān.

Z. Ankori (1959, 429 fn. 203; 1956, 52, with fn. 28) was non-committal about its authorship: "While it is obvious that this Byzantine Karaite once lived and studied in Jerusalem, that chapter in his life was closed by now. He... humbly remembered his past as a student of the Jerusalem masters."

In 1979, G. Vajda (1979, 103, 107, 109 fn. 27) made reference to *Sefer Marpe la-ʿAšem* in a succinct study of two other Byzantine Hebrew treatises, *Meshivat Nefesh* and *Ṣidduq ha-Dīn*, of which he had prepared draft editions based on MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, héb. 670. He considered all three treatises to be original Hebrew compositions, even if he did not rule out the possibility that they were summaries or paraphrases of Arabic texts. In the appendix to an article on *kalām* definitions in Yūsuf al-Baṣīr's *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, posthumously published by P. Fenton, Vajda (1991, 28–30, with fn. 39) cited the definitions of technical terms found in *Marpe la-ʿAšem* based on the Paris manuscript and referred to a planned study on the structure of the treatise which evidently has yet to be completed.

In 2006, Y. Al-Gamil published a print version of *Marpe la-ʿAšem* based on a single, late manuscript (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, MS 848). The Academy of the Hebrew Language in turn included a transcript of MS Paris, BnF, héb. 670, in its Historical Dictionary Project.⁹

⁹ See the *Maʿagarim* database at <https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx?mishibbur=657001>.

In their thorough study and partial edition of Judah Hadassi's *ʿEshkol ha-Kofer*, D. Lasker, J. Niehoff-Panagiotidis, and D. Sklare (Lasker et al. 2019, 302–3, 706–7) classed *Marpe la-ʿAšem*—which is mentioned twice in *ʿEshkol ha-Kofer*¹⁰—with “the original Byzantine Karaite theological treatises written in Hebrew.” They tentatively ascribed it to Tobias ben Moses (“presumed author”), because “the author of *Marpe la-ʿAšem* refers to himself as among ‘the insignificant ones of Jerusalem’ [ולא אני], [מקטני ירושלם אלא קטן שבקטנים], providing reason to assume that Tobias was the author” (Lasker et al. 2019, 11 fn. 37). It is also surmised that the two treatises *Matoq la-Nefesh* (not extant) and *Marpe la-ʿAšem* might be two parts of a single project, given that both titles are derived from the same verse (Prov. 16.24) (Lasker et al. 2019, 11 fn. 38, 13). Since the definitions of terms in Alphabets 64–65 of *ʿEshkol ha-Kofer* draw heavily on the terminological chapters of *Sefer Marpe la-ʿAšem*, the corresponding “Glossary of Greek Terms in *Eshkol ha-Kofer*” covers the full set of Greek glosses contained in *Marpe la-ʿAšem* (Lasker et al. 2019, 731–33).

In a recent article, M. Firrouz and D. Lasker (2020, 12, 16) have placed special emphasis on the propaedeutic and didactic character of the treatise, which the author introduces as “a concise and elucidated book” aimed at a general readership. The book, he advises, should be studied repeatedly and in groups of two or three students.¹¹

¹⁰ In Alphabet 33, letter ח and 100, letter ו.

¹¹ ...ספר מקוצר ומבואר יוכל כל אדם לו. ואם יבוא הקורא בו משער אל שערי או אל פרק מן פרקיו ולא יהיה גלוי לו, ישוב אליו פעם ופעמים, וכל מי שיתפעם בו הוא יבין

2.0. The Arabic Model of *Sefer Marpe la-‘Ašem*

At the end of his introduction, the author of *Sefer Marpe la-‘Ašem* briefly points out that his primer draws on the writings of his masters in Jerusalem: “What I found in their books, I revised and wrote it up.”¹²

One of these books is an anonymous compendium on fundamental theological doctrines, which turns out to be the primary source and model of *Sefer Marpe la-‘Ašem*. Thus far, I have identified three fragments of this treatise deriving from three distinct codices: MSS St Petersburg, RNL, Yevr.-Arab. I 3099, fols 1–28 [= MS ה];¹³ Yevr.-Arab. II 915, fols 13–23 [= MS ג];¹⁴ and Yevr.-Arab. II 1138, fols 1–4 [= MS ט].¹⁵ None of these fragments has been catalogued so far.

The treatise is an early example of Jewish Bahshamī Mu‘tazilī *uṣūl al-dīn*. Measured by word count and average chapter length, its full version was comparable in size to Yūsuf al-Baṣīr’s *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*. Its structure shows conspicuous parallels to ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī’s *Kitāb al-Muḥīṭ bi-‘l-Taklīf*,

הדבר. וכן יתחברו חברים שנים או שלשה יותר על הדבר, ואם יקשה עליהם והם יבינו (MS St Petersburg, IOM, C 103, fol. 69vb, lns 15–20).

¹² ומה שראיתי בספריהם חקקתי וכתבתי אותם (MS St Petersburg, IOM, C 103, fol. 69vb, lns 25–26).

¹³ https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/he/ManuScript/Pages/Item.aspx?ItemID=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001549080205171.

¹⁴ https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/he/ManuScript/Pages/Item.aspx?ItemID=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001601910205171.

¹⁵ https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/he/ManuScript/Pages/Item.aspx?ItemID=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001603740205171.

which was written after his deposition as chief judge of Rayy in 385/995.¹⁶ This book, which has survived exclusively in manuscripts of Karaite provenance, became a prevalent teaching manual of Muʿtazilī *uṣūl al-dīn* in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. It therefore stands to reason that our treatise was composed around this time period. At present, the available evidence is, however, insufficient to venture an identification with a known composition.¹⁷

The treatise targeted a readership similar to that of *Marpe la-ʿAšem* as may be inferred from its closing statement (Yevr.-Arab. I 3099, fol. 28v, lns 36–39):

קד אגתהדנא פי תצמין הדא אלכתאב מא לאח אנה יחסן דכרה פי מתלה
מן אלמכתצראת וסלכנא פיה טריקא יאנס אלמבתדי בה אלי הדא
אלעלם. ומן אללה גל תנאוה ותקדסת אסמאוה נסל אלמעונה ואלתופיק
אלי מא ירציה בעטים אחסאנה ועמוס אמתנאנה ולה אלחמד כמא הו
אהלה ומסתחקה.

We strove to include in this book what is deemed to be fitting to be touched upon in suchlike compendia and pursued a method that is suitable for the beginner to acquire a liking for this science. We ask God, may His praise be exalted and His names sanctified, for support to achieve

¹⁶ A striking example is the position of the chapter *Bāb fī annahu taʿālā yaṣīḥḥu an yurīda wa-yakrah* (MS RNL, Yevr.-Arab. I 3104, fol. 18v) which was later criticised in Ibn Mattaway's *Kitāb al-Majmūʿ fī ʿl-Muḥīṭ bi-ʿl-Taklīf* (ed. Houben 1965, 147; ed. Al-Sayyid ʿAzmi 1965, 151).

¹⁷ Our treatise is only one of several unidentified *uṣūl al-dīn* compositions of the same period. Possible authors include David ben Boʿaz, Yūsuf al-Baṣīr, Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda, or one of the obscure eleventh-century authors of *kalām*-treatises mentioned by Ibn al-Hītī, namely ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf Samiyyah(?) and Ḥananya ben Yaʿqov.

what pleases Him through the magnitude of His benefaction and His all-encompassing benevolence. Praise be to Him in accordance with what He deserves and is entitled to.

The dependence of *Marpe la-ʿAšem* on the Arabic compendium concerns both structure and content. The following table displays the parallel structure of the two treatises which is only compromised by the fact that neither one has come down to us in complete form.¹⁸ Accordingly, it cannot be determined at present whether the Arabic treatise comprised an opening section with terminological definitions and whether the complete text of *Sefer Marpe la-ʿAšem* contained a section on divine speech. While all extant copies of *Sefer Marpe la-ʿAšem* render the same deficient and incomplete text version, the various copyists did not hesitate to change the wording and the hierarchy of the chapter headings, and to introduce new subchapters and a convenient numbering system.¹⁹

¹⁸ Most copies of *Marpe la-ʿAšem* include a note concerning the incompleteness of their Vorlage (see, for instance, MS Paris, BnF. héb. 670, fol. 157v, as quoted in the table below), or left a gap at the location of a presumed lacuna.

¹⁹ On this account, Steinschneider (2013, 199) noted that “this treatise is composed of twelve chapters in the Paris manuscript, but in the Fir-kovich manuscript, according to Pinsker, of three chapters and twenty-five gates, apart from the introduction.” In the following table, [—] indicates a lacuna in the manuscripts. Chapter headings in square brackets are reconstructed from the beginning of the chapter.

<i>Sefer Marpe la-‘Ašem</i> (MS SP, IOM, C 103, fols 69r–83r)	<i>Muḥtaṣar fī uṣūl al-dīn</i> (MSS ג, ה, ח)
הצעה למרפא לעצם [הקדמת הרב המחבר ע"ה] (ra69)	
שאלה (69rb)	
שאלה (69va)	
"תחלת ספר הנקרא מרפא לעצם" תחלת הספר (70ra)	
חוב שנדע אותו מטרם שנאשרהו	[—]
פתרון מאמר בעלי הלשון (דבר, אנוש, חי, גוף) (70ra)	[—]
פתרון החלק (70rb)	[—]
גבול הטפל ואמתתו (70va)	[—]
פרק הנקבץ (70vb)	
שער – חוב החפוש בלב לדעת הבורא ית"ש (71ra)	[באב אלקול פי וגוב אלנטר] (ה 1א)
שאלה (71va)	
שאלה (71va)	פצל [פי אן לא יגוז אן יכון תעאלי מעלומא צ'רורה] (ה 1א)
שאלה (71vb)	
שאלה (72ra)	
פרק [לא נדע את הבורא מהתורה] (72ra)	פצל [פי אן לא ימכן אן יכון אלטריק אלי מערפתה תעאלי מן קול אלאנביא עליהם אלסלאם] (ה 1ב)
פרק (72va)	

שער דעת חדוש העולם (72vb)	באב אלקול פי חדת אלגסאם/אלגואהר (ה 11א)
פרק – הראיה כי שמה טפלים (72vb)	אתבאת אלאכואן (ה 11א)
פרק – ראה אחרת כי שמה טפלים (73rb)	דליל אכר פי אתבאת אלאכואן (ה 12א)
הראיה כי הטפלים חדשים (73rb)	פצל פי אן הדה אלאכואן מחדתה (ה 12ב)
[—]	
[scribal note in MS Paris, BnF, héb. 670, fol. 157v]	
אמר המעתיק: בעונותינו הרבים זה הפרק חסר מן ההעתק ועוד אחריו פרקים [שנים]. כמו כן חסרים מן ההעתק:	
הפרק הרביעי בביאור כי הטפלים לא יסורו מהגופים	
והפרק החמישי בביאור מי הוא לא יפרד מן החדש גם הוא חדש כמוהו,	
כפי מה שייעד הרב המחבר נ"ע' בתחלת השער.	
ובביאור אלו השלושה דרושים בראיות ומופתים יתבאר באמת חדוש העולם ובריאתו במופת וראיה אמיתית, כמבואר בס' נעימות ובס' מחכימת פתי. והשית' ימלא חסרונו ונוכח למצוא אמרי חפץ של הרב המחבר ע"ה"	
שער – הראיה על המחדש אשר חדש את העולם ית"ש וית"ז (73vb)	באב פי אתבאת אלצאנע (ה 13ב)
ראה אחרת (74ra)	פצל (ה 14א)
ראה אחרת (74ra)	פצל (ה 14ב)

שער – היותו יכול לא בכח ולא יצא מהיותו יכול כי הוא יכול לנפשו (74ra)	באב אלקול פי צפאתה תעאלי (ה 15א)
פרק (74rb)	
פרק – כי הוא יכול ולא בכח : כמו הא' ממנו יכול בכח אלא הוא יכול לנפשו (74rb)	
שער – היותו יודע לנפשו ואינו יודע בדעת (74vb)	פצל פי כונה עאלמא (ה 15ב)
פרק (74vb)	
שער – היותו חי לא בחיים אלא חי לנפשו (75rb)	פצל פי כונה חיא (ה 15ב)
שער – היותו שומע לא באזן ורואה לא בעין (75rb)	פצל פי כונה סמיעא בצירא (ה 16א)
שער – היותו נמצא (75va)	פצל פי אנה תעאלי מוגוד (ה 16ב)
שער – היותו חופץ (75vb)	פצל פי אנה תעאלי יצח אן יריד ויכרה (ה 2א)
שער – היותו יכול יודע חי ומצואי לנפשו הוא למען כי יש לו אשור חמישי למענו היו לו אלה האשורים (75vb)	פצל פי אן לה תעאלי צפה קד אכתץ בהא גיר אלצפאת אלמקדם דכרהא (ה 2א)
שער – היותו אין לו ראשון (76ra)	פצל פי אנה תעאלי קאדר עאלם חי מוגוד לא בפאעל (ה 2ב)
	פצל (ה 3א)
	פצל פי דלך (ה 3א)
[There is no corresponding section in <i>Sefer Marpe la-ʿAšem</i>]	אלכלאם פי [מא לא יגוז עליה מן אלצפאת] ומא יתצל בה (ה 4א)
	פצל [לא יגוז אן יכון תעאלי גאהלא, טאנא, נאטרא, מפכרא, מתאמלא] (ה 5א)

	פצל [לא יגזז עלא אללה תעאלי אן יכון משתהיא ולא נאפרא] (ה 65)
	אלכלאם פי אלכלאם (ה 6א)
	פצל [פי כונה קאדרא עלי פעל אלכלאם] (ה 8א)
שער – היותו אינו נראה לעין (76ra)	פצל פי נפי אלרויה ען אלקדים תעאלי ואדראכה בשי [מן אלחואס] (ה 9א)
פרק (76rb)	דליל אזכר (ה 9ב)
שער – כי בורא העולם אינו גוף (76va)	פצל (ה 10א) [—]
שער – היות הבורא אחד ואין שני לו (76va)	[באב אלקול פי אן אלקדים תעאלי ואחד לא תאני לה] (ג 21א)
ראיה אחרת (76vb)	פצל (ג 21ב)
ראיה אחרת (76vb)	פצל (ג 21ב) [—]
הדבור על צדקו (76vb)	[אלכלאם פי אלעדל]
שער – כי אלהינו ית"ש לא יצטרך אל דבר יביאהו אל נפשו להועיל לו ולא יצטרך אל דבר ימנע בו רע יבוא עליו ונזק בו (77ra)	[—]
שער – מעשה האל כי הוא צדק ואין בו חמס ולא עול ותוך (77ra)	
פרק (77va)	
שער – כי הטפים והבהמות יתן להם תחת הכאב ההוא שיביא עליהם דבר טוב ויוסיף על הכאב כמה פעמים (77vb)	

שער – כי אלהינו לא צוה אותנו מצות עשה ומצות לא תעשה כי אם הורנו והשכילנו במה שצונו (78ra)	אלכלאם פי אלתכליף (ה 18א)
שער העשתונות, והם המעשים אשר העושה במ קרוב ממעשה הצדק ורחוק ממעשה הרשע (78va)	אלכלאם פי אלאלטאף (ה 22א)
פרק (78vb)	פצל (ה 22ב)
שער הנבואה (78rb)	אלכלאם פי אלנבואה (ה 24א)
פרק [המופת] (79vb)	פצל [פי אלמעגז] (ה 19א)
שער הראיה על אמתת נבואת משה רבנו בן עמרם ז"ל ועל תורתו כי היא אמת ונכונה (80rb)	באב אלקול פי דכר אלתלאה עלי צחה נבוה סידנא מוסי בן עמראן עליה אלסלאם וצחה שרעה (ה 19ב)
שער כי התורה נתקיימה עלינו עד עולמי עולמים ועד דורי דורים (81ra)	פצל [פי אן הדא אלשרע מובד עלינא ועלי אגיאנא אבדא אלהר לא ינסך] (ה 27א)
שער – מה יהיה שכר במעשים מהלול וחלופו ונועם וכאב גהנום (81vb)	[—] [באב אלקול פי אלתואב ואלעקאב] (ה 25א)
פרק [הלול עושה היפה הנדבה] (82ra)	פצל [מדח פאעל אלחסן אלנדב] (ה 25א)
פרק [האמת אשר להלול ולנעים] (82rb)	פצל פי חד אלמדח ואלתואב ואלדם ואלעקאב (ה 25ב)
שער (82rb)	פצל פי אן אלעבד יסתחק אלתואב במא דכרנאה (ה 25ב)
שער – כי יהיה לו מעשים טובים ויהיה לו מעשים רעים, איך יהיה חשבוננו, ואם יהיו די לא יוסיף מעשה על מעשה (82va)	[—]
פרק (82vb)	פצל (ה 28א)
שער משפט התשובה ומה היא (83ra)	אלקול פי אלאעאדה (ה 28ב)

The correspondence in structure is complemented by the parallelism in the line of reasoning within each chapter. The correlation between the contents of the two texts is most striking in the second part on divine justice. The following text comparison, which due to editorial space restrictions will be confined to the first chapter of the section on divine incentives (*'altāf*; Heb. *'eshtonot*), could readily be extended to the subsequent sections on prophecy, abrogation, and eschatology.²⁰

אלכלאם פי אלאלטאף	שער העשתונות
אללטף הו מא ענדה יכתאר אלמכלף טאעה אלמכלף תעאלי מן פעל אלחסן ותרך אלקביח או מא כאן ענדה אקרב. ואלמפסדה הי מא ענדה יכתאר אלמכלף מעציה אלמכלף מן תרך אלחסן ופעל אלקביח או מא יכון ענדה אקרב אלי דלך. והדא מערוף פי אלשאהד אן בעץ אלאפעאל ידעו אלי בעץ ויבעד ען בעץ.	והם המעשים אשר העושה בם קרוב ממעשה הצדק ורחוק ממעשה הרשע.
פנקול אן אלקדים תעאלי אדא כלף אלעבד טאעתה ועלם אן פי אלמקדור פעלא חסנא ממכנא אדא פעלא אכתאר אלעבד טאעתה או כאן ענדה אקרב אלי טאעתה פאנה יגב אן יפעל תעאלי דלך.	דע כי המעשה אשר יצוה יוי לאדם לעשותו חוב עליו יעשה בו יכולת לעשות הדבר שצוהו ולא יעשה לו דבר ימנע אותו מאשר צוהו וזה המעשה הוא חוב.

²⁰ The text version of *Sefer Marpe la-Ašem* is based on its earliest manuscript, MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, C 103, fols 78va–79vb [= MS C], which was used as antigraph for MS SP, IOM, B 241, fols 149r–152r [= MS B]. The Arabic text is based on MS St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Yevr.-Arab. I 3099, fols 22r–24v [= MS ה] which has been collated with MS RNL, Yevr.-Arab. II 1138, fols 1r–4v [= MS ח].

	<p>וכדלך אן עלם אן פי אלמקדור פעלא אדא פעלה אכתאר אלעבד מעציתה או כאן ענדה קריבא אלי דלך פאנה יקבח מנה תעאלי אן יפעל דלך אלפעל.</p> <p>וכדלך אלחאל פי אלשאהד אן מן אראד מן גירה פעל(!) מא ועלם אנה לא יכתארה אלא בחית יפעל הו פעלא חסנא ממכנא סימא אן כאן ממא לא צָרר עליה פיה פאנה יגב אן יפעלה.</p>
<p>הלא תראה אם יאמר איש לעבדו כתוב ויאסור אצבעותיו בפתיל הלא יהיה בעבור שצוהו לעשות דבר ולא נתן לו דרך לעשותו. ועל כן היה כל שצוה זולתו מצוה חוב עליו שיתן לו יכולת אם יהיה יוכל יתן יכולת או לא ימנעוהו מעשותו. וזה הוא עומד בדעת מבואר.</p> <p>ואמר כי יש שמה דבר אחר הוא חוב עליו כראשון והוא כל מעשה יפול מן המצוה יהיה המצווה בו קרוב ממעשה הצדק ורחוק ממעשה הרשע יהיה על המצווה לעשותו. וכן כל מעשה יעשה אותו המצוה יהיה המצווה בו קרוב ממעשה הרשע ורחוק ממעשה הצדק חוב עליו לא יעשה אותו המצוה יהיה בעבור שישלים חפצו. ואך אם יהיה לא יקשה המעשה על המצווה ואם יניח המעשה לא יהיה עליו רע ואם יעשה אותו לא יהיה לו טוב. ויהיה יחפוז ישלם חפצו חוב עליו שיהיה כל דבר יהיה בו</p>	<p>אלא תרי אן מן אראד מן ולדה מתלא אלקראן ואלכתאבה ועלם מן חאלה אן דפק בה וכאטבה בלין אכתאר פעל מראדה מנה ואנה אן כאטבה באלגפא לא יכתאר דלך פאנה יגב עליה לא מחאלה פעל מא ענדה יכתאר ולדה טאעיתה ויקבח מנה מא ענדה יכתאר מעציתה כמה יגב עליה תמכינה מן אלקלם ואלדואה לתצח מנה אלכתאבה וכמא²¹ יקבח מנה רבטה אצאבעה אלתי לא תצח מע דלך אלכתאבה לאן מנע מא לא יצח אלפעל אלא ענדה כמנע מא לא יצח אלא בה והו ואן כאן אלעבד קד יצח מנה פעל [ה 22ב] אלטאעה ואן מנע מא לא יכתאר אלפעל אלא ענדה. וליס כדלך חאלה אדא מנע ממא לא יצח אלפעל אלא בה. פאנה למא עלם מן חאלה אנה לא יכתאר פעל אלטאעה אלא ענד פעל אלחסן ממכן(!) צאר דלך</p>

כמה ה²¹

<p>האדם קרוב מעשות צויו למען לא יהיה המעשה ההוא מכחיש שלום חפצו. אם אין עליו קשיון במעשה לא יפחד מרע ולא יבוא עליו טוב.</p> <p>הלא אם יקרא האדם את חברו לאכול לחמו והוא חפץ למאד יאכל לחמו וידע אם ידבר אתו דברים קשים לא יאכל ואם ידבר עמו דברים רכים יאכל הלא אם ידבר עמו הדברים הרעים היה מכחיש לחפצו ואף אם לא יקשה עליו מעשה ביאתו אליו לא דבר רע במעשה ולא דבר טוב.</p> <p>וכן מי יהיה חפץ ממנו יכתוב ויקרא וידע אם יגעור בו לא יכתוב ולא יקרא ואם ידבר עמו דבר רך יכתוב ויקרא הלא יגעור לבנו יהיה מכחיש חפצו.</p>	<p>אלפעל במנוזה מא לא יצח אלפעל אלא בה.</p> <p>אלא תרי אנה יגב עלי מן קדמנא דכרה לה חאלה אן ידפק בולדה כמא יגב עליה תמכינה מן אלקלם ואלדואה ואמתאל דלך כתירה. וכמא יגב אן יפעל אללטף כדלך יקבח אן יפעל אלמפסדה ואלכלאם פי באבהא אבין ואוצח.</p>
<p>ועל זה אמר היה חוב עליו ית"ש יתעשת לאדם בכל דבר שידע כי יהיה בו קרוב ממעשה הצדק ורחוק ממעשה הרשע כמו היה הראשון חוב עליו בגלל שישלים חפצו. וכן אם יחפוץ מאדם מעשה נדבה בצום שאינו קבוע והוא ידע כי יש מעשה יהיה העושה בו קרוב מעשות הנדבה ורחוק מי שלא יניחה חוב עליו לעשותו לו כל זה למען אשר ישלים חפצו.</p>	<p>ואללטף פי גיר אלואגב ואגב אן יפעלה אלמכלף תעאלי כוגובה פי אלואגב מן חית אנהמא מראדין. וכדלך ואגב אן יפעל אללטף אלמסהל כוגוב אללטף אלדי ענדה יכתאר אלעבד טאעתה לאנהמא אזאחה עלה אלמכלף.</p>

To further illustrate the relationship between the Arabic treatise and its Hebrew adaptation, the following table juxtaposes English translations of the beginning of the section on divine incentives/stimuli (Ar. *'altāf*; Heb. *'eshtonot*).

<p>Section on the incentives (ha-‘eshtonot)</p>	<p>Discourse on the incentives (al-‘altāf)</p>
<p>[Incentives] are actions on account of which the person who performs them becomes more likely to do good deeds and to refrain from evil deeds.</p>	<p>An incentive is something on account of which the person, who is liable to an obligation, chooses to obey God, who imposes the obligation on him, by doing the good and refraining from the evil, or on account of which he is more likely to do so.</p> <p>A disincentive is something on account of which the person, who is liable to an obligation, chooses to disobey God, who imposes the obligation on him, by refraining from the good and doing the evil or on account of which he is more likely to do so.</p> <p>[We] know from our own experience that some actions induce [someone to do] other actions or deter [someone from doing] other actions.</p>
<p>Know that God is bound to give to the human being, upon whom He enjoins an action, the capacity to carry out the enjoined action and not to put obstacles in his way that prevent him from doing the enjoined action.</p>	<p>We thus say that when God enjoins on a servant to obey Him, and knows that He can perform a facilitating good action on account of which the servant will choose to obey Him or becomes more likely to do so, then God is bound to do so. Conversely, when He knows that He can perform an action on account of</p>

	<p>which the servant will choose to disobey Him or becomes more likely to do so, it becomes evil on God's part to perform that action.</p> <p>This is consistent with our own experience: if someone wants another person to carry out an action and knows that this person will only choose to carry it out, if he himself performs a facilitating good action, he is bound to do so, all the more if it does not entail any adverse consequences for him.</p>
<p>Do you not realise that if someone orders his servant to write, while tying his fingers together with a string, it is as if he asked him to do something while preventing him from doing so.</p> <p>This is why whoever enjoins something on another person, must—whenever possible—provide him with the means that enable him to do so or must not prevent him from doing so. This is commonsensical.</p> <p>What applies to this first scenario also applies to another one, namely that the person who imposes an obligation is bound to perform any action on account of</p>	<p>Do you not realise that someone who wants his son to read or write, for instance, and knows that he will choose to comply with his wish, if he dabs him and speaks to him gently, but will not choose to do so, if he speaks to him harshly, must by all means do what prompts his son to choose to obey him, whereas it would be inappropriate of him to do what prompts him to disobey him. Likewise, he must provide him with all necessary means, such as pen and inkwell, to enable him to write, whereas it would be inappropriate of him to tie his fingers together so that he will be unable</p>

which the person who is asked to carry out the obligation is more likely to do a good deed and less likely to do an evil deed. Likewise, in order for his wish to be satisfied, the person who imposes an obligation is bound to abstain from any action on account of which the person who is asked to carry out the obligation is more likely to do an evil deed and less likely to do a good deed.

The same applies even to an action which comes easy to the person who is asked to carry it out, and which does neither entail adverse consequences for him, if he does not carry it out, nor positive consequences, if he carries it out. Given that [the one who imposes an action] wants his wish to be satisfied, he is bound to provide all means on account of which the person who is asked to carry it out is more likely to comply with his requests, for otherwise he would undermine the sincerity of his wish, [even] if the action comes easy to him and does neither entail the fear of adverse consequences for him nor the prospect of a favourable outcome.

to write. To deprive [someone] of the conditions that are indispensable to carry out an action is tantamount to withholding from him the tools which are essential for the action to be carried out.

However, while the servant has the ability to obey, even when he is deprived of the [incentive] on account of which he will choose to carry out the action, this is not the case if he is deprived of the tools which are essential for the action to be carried out. When it is known, however, that he will only choose to act in obedience by virtue of a good facilitating action, then this action becomes equivalent to the tools which are essential for the action to be carried out.

Do you not realise that in the aforementioned example the person [who wants his son to write] is bound to dab his son gently and to provide him with pen and inkwell? There are many other examples of this kind.

Just as [God] is bound to provide an incentive, it is inappropriate of Him to provide a disincentive. The case of the latter is even more obvious and compelling.

<p>Is it not the case that if someone calls on his fellow man to eat his food and eagerly wants him to eat his food, and also knows that he will not eat his food, if he speaks to him harshly, but will eat it, if he speaks to him gently, he would undermine the sincerity of his wish, if he spoke to him harshly, even though providing him with the food would be easy for him and neither entail adverse nor favourable consequences.</p> <p>Accordingly, if someone wants his son to write and read and knows that if he rants at him, he will neither write nor read, and that if he speaks to him gently, he will write and read, would it not undermine the sincerity of his wish, if he ranted at him?</p>	
<p>On these grounds I say that God is bound to provide a human being with all incentives of which He knows that on account of it [the human being] will be more likely to do a good deed and less likely to do an evil deed. As in the first scenario, He is bound to do so in order to safeguard the sincerity of His wish.</p>	<p>Moreover, God, who imposes the obligation, is bound to provide an incentive even for actions which are not obligatory, as He does in the case of obligatory actions, since both are manifestations of His will.</p> <p>Furthermore, just as He is bound to provide the incentive on account of which the servant will choose to obey Him, He is</p>

<p>The same even applies to a supererogatory act, such as a non-statutory fasting: if He wishes a human being to carry it out and knows that there is an action on account of which that human being will be more likely to perform the supererogatory act and less likely to refrain from it, He is bound to perform that action, all that in order to safeguard the sincerity of His wish.</p>	<p>bound to provide the incentive which facilitates the action [of the servant], for both [incentives] contribute to remedying the deficiencies which hinder the person who is subject to His imposition [from carrying out His will].</p>
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The comparison between the Arabic text and its Hebrew adaptation is insightful in several respects. It is a poignant example of a text form in Byzantine Hebrew literature that is neither a translation nor an abridgement, yet clearly depends on written Arabic source texts.

It demonstrates the adaptor’s creative handling of his source material and its adaptation to suit the pedagogical requirements of the target group by adding explanatory notes and illustrative examples.

The availability of the Arabic text significantly eases the access to a Hebrew treatise that is not only unwieldy on account of its linguistic and semantic idiosyncrasies (Hopkins 1992; 2013; Maman 1978; 2013), but also because of its deficient transmission, whereby the oldest textual witnesses are removed from the original composition by several centuries.

Every additional identification of Arabic source texts processed within ‘the Byzantine Karaite Literary Project’ will help us to obtain a more nuanced picture of this large-scale enterprise

and to detect the fingerprints of additional agents whose contribution has been eclipsed by the main protagonists who are known by name.

In recent years, all these points have been explored in greater depth by Amir Gaash in a series of studies on the Byzantine grammatical treatise *Me'or 'Ayin*, which depends on various Arabic source texts, above all on *Kitāb al-'Uqūd fī Taṣārīf al-Lughā al-'Ibrāniyya* (Gaash 2015b; 2017a; 2017b; 2018; 2023; Howard, 2017; *Kitāb al-'Uqūd* has been studied and edited in Vidro 2011; 2013). Among many other things, Gaash has demonstrated the heuristic value of misunderstandings and misinterpretations by the Byzantine translators and recipients. He also established that these translators and adaptors were working with either manuscripts written in sparsely punctuated Arabic script or transcriptions into Hebrew script that contained mistakes issuing from a misread antigraph in Arabic script.

A thorough examination of these and other features will require comprehensive documentation and investigation of 'the Byzantine Karaite Literary Project', which will be undertaken by a research team bringing together the requisite diversity of skills and competences. The present study is but a small contribution towards realising such a project.

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EARLY TENTH-CENTURY JUDAEO-ARABIC EXEGESIS ON THE VISIT TO ABRAHAM

Miriam Goldstein

Jacob al-Qirqisānī (Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq ibn Sam‘awayh al-Qirqisānī) was Baghdad’s leading Karaite scholar during the first half of the tenth century. Exegete, jurist, and theologian, he wrote exclusively in Arabic. He was one of a number of Jewish scholars who pioneered the development of a new Jewish authorial culture in the Islamic East, composing treatises in a variety of genres, which feature programmatic introductions, declarations of intention and perspective, and assessments of competing views.

His two major works were a pair of compositions on biblical exegesis: the *Book of Lights and Watchtowers* (*Kitāb al-Anwār wa-l-Marāqib*), completed in 927, which he often referred to as ‘my book on the commandments’; and his *Book of Gardens and Parks* (*Kitāb al-Riyāḍ wa-l-Ḥadā’iq* = *KR*), completed in 938, which was intended to address literary and grammatical issues, rather than legal ones. Al-Qirqisānī’s descriptions of the two works (for example, in the preface to *KR*), and the numerous cross-references between them, demonstrate that he intended

them as a complementary pair. Al-Qirqisānī also wrote a voluminous commentary on the first chapter of Genesis, which he called *Tafsīr Bereshit* (= *TB*). He completed this work some time prior to the *Book of Lights*.

The following is an edition and English translation of the initial section of al-Qirqisānī's *KR* on *parashat Vayera*, covering Gen. 18.1–15. This segment is part of a larger project funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.¹

In this section al-Qirqisānī deals at length with the classic exegetical question regarding the relation between the chapter's first and second verses. When “the LORD” is said to have appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18.1), how does this relate to Gen. 18.2, in which Abraham notices “three men” approaching him? In the framework of this discussion, al-Qirqisānī also takes up the terms used to refer to these visitors, considering whether they are indeed ‘men’, or perhaps, in reality, angels. If they are angels, why

¹ Project VO 2431/1-1, ‘Independence and diversity: Unknown Karaite Bible commentaries in Judeo-Arabic from the early classical age’, with Ronny Vollandt of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität. I am grateful to the research assistants who form my team in the Genesis project—Efraim Ben-Porat, Antonio Di Gesù, Noya Duanis, and Yinon Kahan—for their pleasant and devoted assistance in various essential aspects of preparing the Judaeo-Arabic text for this edition. I thank Gregor Schwarb for his invaluable assistance in helping me in beginning to learn the intricacies of the Classical Text Editor software, which is the technological backbone of this project, as well as for his advice on the text and translation included here. I dedicate this discussion to my teacher, Prof. Geoffrey Khan, who was the first to introduce me to Karaite Bible exegesis and to the treasures of the Firkovitch collections of the Russian National Library.

does Abraham offer them earthly care, including food, water, and the washing of their feet?

In raising these questions, al-Qirqisānī exemplifies his method throughout *KR*, in which he assembles a wide variety of contemporaneous and earlier views on the questions he raises. He cites views for and against linking the two verses. He cites views that interpret the visitors as humans and views that interpret them as angels, and those that do both. Al-Qirqisānī also, of course, presents his own views and his own refutations of some of the exegetical views that he cites. His approach is based on a rationalistic outlook, often marshaling scriptural usage in other instances to prove his points.

Al-Qirqisānī continues, raising the issue of Sarah's laughter when she overhears that she is to bear a son, questioning the morality of her denial of the laugh (Gen. 18.15). In his view, Sarah is of impeccable moral character, and he proposes to resolve the problem of her apparent lie by reinterpreting the conversation between her and the visitor so that Sarah denies a particular kind of scornful laughter, and affirms another, which was a laugh of joy.

Examination of the Genesis 18 commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli, published by Marzena Zawanowska (2012, 127*–37*), definitively underlines points of distinction between these two exegetes. Yefet was active in Jerusalem during the final third of the tenth century, and was a central figure in the early generations of the Karaite 'Mourners of Zion' active in the area. The extent to which Yefet had access to al-Qirqisānī's *KR* is as yet unclear, and will hopefully become clearer in the near future. In certain cases

in *Vayera*, the two exegetes address the same basic questions. One example relates to the opening of Genesis 18. Yefet unequivocally states that vv. 1 and 2 refer to two different visits. He explicitly rejects the view that the verses describe the same visit, and that the one God is described as three “men” in the following verse. He explains the sequence of verses at length, invoking the *mudawwin*, or biblical redactor, in order to support his exegetical decisions and to overcome gaps or inconsistencies in the narrative. Positing the work of this redactor figure was a technique he likely learned from al-Qirqisānī himself, and one that he could have encountered in the latter’s 37 principles of biblical interpretation.²

Despite these points of overlap, Yefet and al-Qirqisānī nonetheless exhibit very different styles in their exegetical composition. Yefet composes in the method of the Jerusalem school of Karaite exegesis, offering explanations for nearly every word and phrase in the verses. He creates a running paraphrase in Judaeo-Arabic. In it, he quotes extensively from Biblical Hebrew, effectively creating a blended Judaeo-Arabic/Hebrew narrative that shapes the base text according to his own exegetical preferences. This style contrasts with the focused method of al-Qirqisānī, who explicitly establishes the issues he will discuss,

² The first 24 principles can be found in the Arabic-script text published by Hirschfeld (1918). Principles 25–37 have recently been published by Joseph Habib (2023). Numerous additional manuscripts of these 37 principles were identified by Bruno Chiesa, and I hope in the near future to publish a critical edition and English translation on the basis of Chiesa’s work.

often highlighting them via phrases that title each section. Al-Qirqisānī does not take on the comprehensive type of commenting that was developed by the Karaite exegetes of Jerusalem.

The following are the manuscripts used in this edition, and their sigla.³ I have not marked morphological or syntactic features that are common in Judaeo-Arabic.⁴ I have not translated the frequent use of formulaic epithets following the name of God, in this text, for which the interested reader is directed to the original Judaeo-Arabic.

Base manuscript:

RNL Evr.-Arab. I:4529, with siglum פח

Compared manuscripts:

RNL Evr.-Arab. I:3198, with siglum פב

RNL Evr.-Arab. I:4829, with siglum פל

³ Many of the manuscript identifications that have enabled my current project on al-Qirqisānī's Pentateuch commentary were obtained via the Center for the Study of Judeo-Arabic Literature and Culture of the Ben-Zvi Institute (Jerusalem, Israel), where I worked as part of a team cataloguing sections of the biblical material of the Firkovitch collection during the years 2001–2010. The identifications of manuscripts of al-Qirqisānī's *KR* are the fruits of research by Prof. Bruno Chiesa, of blessed memory, and the cataloguing of the Genesis fragments was carried out by team members Krisztina Szilágyi and Rachel Hasson; I am very grateful for their precise and important work.

⁴ For extensive discussion of the morphological and syntactic issues dividing classical Arabic and written Judaeo-Arabic during this period, see Blau (1995). In the textual section that follows I refer frequently to Blau (2006).

1.0. Conventions

The following conventions are used in the textual transcription and translation that follows:

“Looking up, he saw”

English text within quotes represents biblical phrases that appear in Hebrew in Qirqisānī’s original text

[Two Appearances or One]

Headings that I have added for the sake of clarification are presented between square brackets; these exist only on the side of the English translation

(instead)

Text in round brackets in the English translation represents words that I have included for the sake of narrative flow; they are not represented in the Judaeo-Arabic, nor is there a lacuna in the Judaeo-Arabic.

(= the philosophers)

Clarifications that I have added to the English translation are indicated in round brackets after an equals sign.

Ps. 2.7

Biblical verses are noted in the margins, and are cited in the English translation according to my own shaping of two JPS Bible translations (JPS; *Tanakh*).

References

Blau, Joshua. 1995. *A Grammar of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic*. 2nd edition. Jerusalem: Magnes. [Hebrew]

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2.0. Text

In the following pages, the English translation can be found on even-numbered pages, with the Judaeo-Arabic edition on odd-numbered pages.

“The LORD appeared to him by the terebinth of Mamre.” Gen. 18.1

(Scripture) recounted in this story how God appeared to Abraham and revealed himself to him in this place, which is the terebinths of Mamre. This place is said to face in the direction of
 5 the Temple, close to the graves of the Patriarchs, peace and mercy be upon them. Mamre is one of the three people whom Scripture mentioned as the allies of Abraham, peace be upon him, when it says “Now he dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre Gen. 14.13
 10 the Amorite, kinsman of Eshkol and Aner, these being Abram’s allies.”

[Two Appearances or One?]

If someone asks regarding the statements “The LORD appeared to him” and “Looking up, he saw,” saying: Is the intent Gen. 18.2
 of the phrase “he appeared” what (Scripture) explained
 15 afterwards, that is, the account of the three men, or is it a different (incident)? People have differed on this issue.

Some claimed that these are two distinct accounts, and that God appeared to him in a certain way. In the midst of this, he discerned those three individuals. When he saw them, he said
 20 to God “Do not go on past your servant,” that is, he asked him if Gen. 18.3
 he would grant him a delay and wait for him so that he could fulfill his commitment to those (three), because he recognised their worth and high rank, as well as that they were angels of God. He then approached them and said “Let a little water be Gen 18.4
 25 brought.”

Others said that these two stories comprise a single (account), and that after (Scripture) said “The LORD appeared to Gen. 18.1
 him,” it provides explanation and detail regarding it, that is,

- פל 162ב **וירא אליו יוי באלני ממרא** אכברת פי הזה אלקצה באן בר יח 1
אללה תראיא לאברהם ותגלא עליה פי הדא אלמוצע אלדי
הו בלוט ממרא והדא אלמוצע עלי מא יקאל פי קבלה בית
אלמקדס קריב מן קבור אלעבא עליהם אלסלאם ואלרחמה.
פל 163א **וממרא** פהו אחד אלתלתה | אנפס אלדין אכבר אלכתאב
אנהם חלפא אברהם ע' א' אד יקול **והוא שוכן באלני ממרא** בר יח 13
האמרי אחי אשכל ואחי ענר והם בעלי ברית אברם.

- פאן סאל סאיל ען קו' **וירא אליו יוי וקו' וישא עיניו וג'** בר יח 2
10 פקאל הל קו' **וירא** מענאה מא שרחה בעד דלך מן קצה
אלתלתה רגאל אם הו גירה? פקד אכתלף אלנאס פי דלך.

- פזעם קום אן כל ואחדה מן אלקצתין גיר אלאכרי, ואן
אללה תגלי לה במעני מא. בין הו פי דלך, אד נטר אלי אלאיד
אלתלתה נפר. פלמא ראהם קאל ללה **אל נא תעבור מעל** בר יח 3
15 **עבדך** ודלך באן סאלה אן ימהלה ויעבר לה חתי יקצי דמאם
אלאיד למא תבינה מנהם מן אלפצל ואלשרף ואנהם מלאיכה
אללה, פאקבל עליהם פקאל **יקח נא מעט מים.** בר יח 4

וקאל אכרון בל אלקצתין ואחד ואנה למא קאל **וירא**
אליו יוי שרח דלך ופסרה באן הדא אלתגלי ואלתראי הו באן

that this appearance and revelation are the approach of the three men. He saw them approaching him, and ran to meet them and prostrated himself. This indicates that the phrase “He Gen. 18.2
ran to greet them” precedes and introduces the statement “Do Gen. 18.3

5 not go on past your servant,” and this refutes the first view.¹ If a detractor notes a supposed flaw, that the statement “Do not go on past your servant” is in the singular usage, while (these angels) are three, we respond that the statement was addressed to one of the three (mentioned) in the phrases “Bathe” and Gen. 18.4–5
10 “Refresh yourselves.”

[‘Men’ or ‘the LORD’?]

If someone asks, saying, (Scripture) says they are ‘men’ and then refers to them as ‘the LORD’. They must be either the Creator or created beings. If they are created beings, then how
15 can created beings be named with the name of the divinity, and if they are the Creator, how can the term ‘men’ be applied to them? We respond that the angels and the prophets at times address people in certain places (in Scripture) on behalf of God, in which case they speak (literally) about themselves, while the
20 intent is (to speak) about God.

We have explained this in the refutation of Benjamin (al-Nihāwandī) regarding his statement about the angel, in our

¹ The view above, which interprets the beginning verses of the chapter as two distinct accounts.

- וגה אליה הולאי אלתלתה נפר פראהם וקופא עליה פעדא
 פח 37א ללקאהם וסגד. ידל דלך עלי אן קו' **וירץ לקראתם** מתקדם בר יח 2
 לקו' **אל נא תעבור** והדא ירד אלקול אלאול. פאן אעתל בר יח 3
 מעתל בקו' **אל נא תעבור** ואן דלך בלסאן פראד והם פכאנו
 תלתה, קלנא יגוז אן יכון קד כאן | אלקול לאחד אלתלתה פל 163ב
 בקו' **ורחצו וסעדו**. בר יח 4-5

פאן סאל סאיל פקאל פאנה יקול אנהם **אנשים** תם יקול
 פיהם **וי** פליס יכלו אן יכון דלך כאלק או מכלוק. פאן כאן
 מכלוקא, פכף יגוז אן יסם אלמכלוק באסם אלמעבוד? ואן 10
 כאן כאלקא פכף יגוז אן יקע עליה אנסאן? פנקול אן
 אלמלאיכה ואלאנביא קד יכאטבון אלנאס פי בעץ אלמואצע
 ען אלבארי גל תנאוה ויכון כלאמהם ען אנפסהם ואלגרץ פי
 דלך אלבארי גל ותעאלי.

וקד שרחנא דלך פי אלרד עלי בנימין פי קו' באלמלאך 15
 ודלך פי אלקול עלי אלפראיץ. פמן דלך קול אלמלאך להגר

work on the commandments.² One example of this is the angel's words to Hagar, "I will greatly increase your offspring." He is Gen. 16.10

not the one who will carry this out, but rather God is the one who will multiply her offspring. Similarly, Moses speaks to the

5 Israelites, saying, "I will grant rain for your land," as a Deut. 11.14

statement representing God, and not (intending) that he (= Moses) will do this. There are many similar statements, which

we have mentioned there. Similar to this is the statement of the angel to Moses from the burning thornbush, "I am the God of Exod. 3.6

10 your father;" he (= the angel) is not the god of his father, but rather this is speech on behalf of the Creator.

It says here "the LORD appeared to him." Given that the Gen. 18.1 concept of appearance requires one who is seen and one who

sees, (Scripture's) statement "He lifted up his eyes" leads of Gen. 18.2

15 necessity to the statement "He looked." This further demonstrates that the two accounts are a single unity, and that the second is a further explanation of the first. It mentions regarding Abraham that he saw, twice. The first is "He lifted up his eyes and looked," and the second is "When he saw them, he

² This is a reference to *Kitāb al-Anwār* (ed. Nemoy 1939–1943, III:319). The author uses the term *qawl* lit. 'discussion' to refer to his composition here, in contrast to the usual way that he refers to this work, *kitāb al-farā'id* 'the book of commandments' or *al-kitāb 'alladhī takallamna fīhi 'alā 'l-farā'id* 'the book in which we discussed the commandments'. This phrase may be a scribal mistake for *al-qawl fī 'l-afāriq* 'the discussion of the sects', which approximates the title of the third section of *Kitāb al-Anwār*. This formulation would also provide a more exact reference, which is al-Qirqisānī's usual approach in referring to this work. For a discussion of the term *'afāriq*, see Lane (1863, 2440).

- 10 בר טז הרבה ארבה את זרעך וליס הו אלדי יפעל דלך ואנמא אללה
 14 דב יא הו אלדי יכתר נסלהא. וכדלך קול מוסי לבני אס' ונתתי מטר
 ארצכם קול ען אללה לא אנה הו יפעל דלך. ולדלך נטאיר
 כתירה קד דכרנאהא הנאך. ומתל דלך קול אלמלאך למוסי מן
 5 נאר אלעוסג אנכי אלהי אביך. ליס הו אלאה אביה ואנמא
 שמ ג 6 דלך כטאב ען אלבארי גל תנאווה.

- 1 בר יח פלמא קאל האהנא וירא אליו יוי וכאן תראיי ידל עלי
 2 בר יח מתראי אליה ומן ירי, כאן קו' וישא עיניו יקתצי קו' וירא והדא
 איצא ממא ידל עלי אן אלקצתין הי ואחדה ואן אלתאניה
 שרח ותפסיר ללאולי. ודכר פי אברהים אנה ראי מרתין. | פל 164א
 אחדהא קו' וישא עיניו וירא ואלתאניה קו' וירא וירץ

ran to meet them.” It is possible that the initial statement “he saw” means that he saw people whom he did not recognise, and that the second statement indicates that Abraham became cognizant (of more), and realised that they were angels.

- 5 The statement regarding them that they are men means that they had the shape of men. This is similar to the statement “And six men entered by way of the upper gate.” They were not people, but were rather angels in the shape of people. Like this is the verse “the man Gabriel” and the statement of the wife of Dan. 9.21
- 10 Manoah, “The man has just appeared to me.” Judg. 13.10

(Scripture’s) statement “the LORD” accords with what we Gen. 18.1 have already stated: If it is possible that the angel and the prophet could address people in a way with an apparent sense indicating themselves (as speaker), but in which the actual intent is God (as speaker), then it is possible that people could address him (= an angel) with an address intended for God, while the apparent sense refers to him (= the angel). This, despite the fact that angels can at times be referred to as “the LORD”; this is a statement that we have explained elsewhere.

20 [A Challenge: Angels Who Eat and Drink]

- If someone says, If these three individuals were angels, then how is it possible for angels to eat and drink, since (the story affirms this explicitly) saying “He waited on them under the tree as they ate.” (This is demonstrated by) the beginning of Gen. 18.8
- 25 the account as well, (where) he says to them, “And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves.” If he knew Gen. 18.5 that they were angels, would he have allowed for the possibility

לקראתם. ויגזו אן יכון קו' אולא וראי אנה ראי אשכאצא מא
לם יעלם מן הם. ואלקול אלתאני הו אנה תחקק אברהם ועלם
באנהם מלאיכה.

פקו' פיהם אנהם אנאס יעני עלי צורה אלנאס ודלך נטיר

- 5 קו' **והנה ששה אנשים באים מדרך שער העליון** ולם יכוננו נאס
וּאִנְמָא כִּאֲנו מִלְאִיכָה פִּי צוֹר אִנְאִס. וּמִתַּל דִּלְךָ קו' **והאיש**
גבריאל וקול מראה מנוח **הנה נראה אלי האיש.**
שופ יג 10

- וּקו' **וי** עלי סביל מא תקדם מן אלקול, ודלך אנה אדא
גִּאֲז אֵן יכֹּאטֵב אִלְמִלְאֵךְ לִלְנֹאס כִּדְלָךְ אִלְנָבִי כְּטֹאבֹא טֹאֲהֲרָה
10 יִקְצֹד בֵּה נִפְסָה, וְאַלְחֻקִּיקָה פִּיה רֹאגְעָה אֵלִי אִלְלָה, גִּאֲז אֵן
יִכֹּאטֵבוּ בֵּה אִלְנֹאס מִכֹּאטֵבָה יִרִידוֹן בֵּהֹא אִלְלָה וְטֹאֲהֲרָה
רֹאגְעָה | אִלְיָה. הִדָּא אִיִּצָּא עֲלֵי אִנְהָ לֹא יִנְכֹּר אֵן יִכּוֹן אִלְמִלְאֵךְ
פח 37 יִסְמִי יוֹי. וְהִדָּא אִיִּצָּא קֹד שִׁרְחֲנָאָה פִּי גִיר הִדָּא אִלְמוּצָע.

- 15 פֹּאן קֹאֵל קֹאִיל פֹּאן כִּאֲנו הוֹלָאִי אִלְנִפֵּר אִלְתַּלְתָּה
מִלְאִיכָה, פִּכִּיף יִגְזוֹ עֲלֵי אִלְמִלְאִיכָה אִלְאֲכֹל וְאַלְשֶׁרֶב, אִדִּי יִקּוֹל
וְהוּא עוֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם תַּחַת הָעֵץ וַיֹּאכְלוּ. וּמִן אֲבִתְדֵי אִלְקִצָּה
8 בִּר יח 8 אִיִּצָּא קו' לֵהֶם וְאַקְחָה פֶת לֶחֶם וְסַעְדוּ לִבְכֶּם. פֹּאן כִּאֲן קֹד
5 בִּר יח 5 עֵלֶם אִנְהֶם מִלְאִיכָה פֹּהֵל כִּאֲן יִגְזוֹ עֲנֵדָה עֲלֵי אִלְמִלְאִיכָה

that angels would eat? If it were possible that the angels, spiritual beings, could eat food, then it would be necessary that they defecate, and then they would be susceptible to uncleanness and impurity. Many things that are impossible for the spiritual, pure, and holy beings would then ensue. We respond that exegetes hold a variety of views on this.

[Response: The Three Are Men]

Some claim that they were not angels, but rather they were humans, and that Abraham knew who they were, as well as that they were prophets close to God. For this reason, when he saw them, he began to run towards them and prostrated himself to them, in order to show honour and respect toward them.

(These exegetes continued,) saying: If someone denies this, saying, Who of (Abraham's) generation was more honoured than he was? We say, Shem was an honoured prophet, and Ever was also a prophet, and we have shown that he was a prophet. There was also Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham and to whom Abraham tithed. It cannot be denied that there may have been others as well.

(These exegetes continued,) saying: When he saw them and recognised them and they stood near him, as it says **“Three men stood over against him,”** he realised that they had been sent to him. Then he sought out the most respected one to address him, saying **“My lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight.”** The meaning of that is, ‘O my lord,’ and then he referred

4 uncleanness] Blau (2006, 514).

פ' 164 ב אלטעאל? ולאן גאז אן יכון אלמלאיכה | אלווחאניין יאכלו
אלטעאלס אנה ליגב אן יכונו יתגוטון, פתקדר ענדהם
אלפלאדה ואלנגאסה. וילזם דלך אשיא כחירה ממא תסתחיל
פי אלווחאניין אלמטהרין אלמקדסין. קלנא אן ללנאס פי דלך
אקאוויל. 5

פקום זעמו אנהם לס יכונו מלאיכה ואנמא כאנו נאס
ואן אברהם כאן עארפא בהם ואנהם אנביא מקרבין. פלדלך
למא ראהם באדר פעדא אליהם חתי סגד להם ודלך אגלאלא
להם ותעטים. 10

קאלו פאן אנכר מנכר דלך באן יקול ומן אלדי כאן פי
דלך אלעצר מן אלנאס מן הו אפצל מנה? קלנא קד כאן שם
נבי פאצל וכאן איצא עבר נבי וקד ארינא אנה כאן נבי. וכאן
איצא מלכי צדק אלדי ברך אברהם ודפע אליה אברהם
אלעשר, ולם ינכר איצא אן יכון קד כאן הנאך גיר הולאי. 15

קאלו פלמא ראהם וערפהם ווקפו עליה לקו' **נצבים עליו** בר י"ח 2
עלם אנהם איאה קאצדין פקצד אלאגל מנהם באלמכאטבה.

to all of them together in the phrase “bathe your feet” and the rest of the verse. Gen. 18.4

(Abraham) said, “Let a little water be brought,” because when one has walked a great distance and desires to rest, it is customary that he wash his feet and rest in the shade and recline. Then (Scripture) followed this statement with a mention of the food, according to what is required for guests, and they responded to him regarding what he asked. Gen 18.4

[Alternate Response: They Are Angels]

On the other hand, exegetes who claimed that they were angels stated that the phrase “and they ate” does not refer to actual eating, but rather refers to (the concept of) annihilation, as in the verse “You shall destroy (lit. ‘eat’) all the peoples,” whose meaning is ‘You will annihilate.’ (These exegetes) said that they caused Abraham to imagine that they were eating, while this was not actually the act of eating. Gen. 18.8 Deut. 7.16

[Refutation of This View]

The author of this statement has leaped from the frying pan into the fire!³ Even so, he was not able to escape what he was trying to avoid. This is because when Abraham laid the food out before them, this meant that he believed that eating was possible for them, because it is impossible that he would present it to them and invite them to something that was impossible for them. Thus when he says to them “that you may refresh yourselves” and they respond to him, “Do as you have Gen. 18.5

³ Lit. He was fleeing ‘evil’, and he got entangled in something worse than it.

פקאל אדני אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך. מעני דלך יא סיד. תם 3 בר יח
 גמע אלגמיע בקו' ורחצו רגליכם וסאיר אלקול. 4 בר יח
 פקו' יקח נא מעט מים לאן סביל מן משא פי טריק בעיד 4 בר יח
 ואראד אלראחה אן יגסל רגליה ויסתתר פי פיא ויתכי. תם
 5 אתבע דלך בדכר אלטעאם עלי סביל מא יגב ללציף פאגאבוה
 אלי מא סאלהם מן דלך.

פאמא מן זעם | אנהם מלאיכה פאנה קאל אן קו' פל 165א
 ויאכלו ליס הו אכל חקיקי ואנמא הו ראגע אלי אלאפנא, 8 בר יח
 10 גטיר קו' ואכלת את כל העמים אלדי מענאה ותפני. קאל דב ז 16
 פכאנו יוהמון אברהים אנהם יאכלון ולם יכן אכל באלחקיקה.

וצאחב הדא אלקול הרב מן שר תורט | פי מא הו אשר 38א
 מנה, ומע דלך פלם יתכלץ ממא הרב מנה, אד כאן פי ערץ
 15 אברהים עליהם אלטעאם מא קד אגאז עליהם אלאכל אד
 כאן מן אלמחאל אן יערץ עליהם וידעוהם אלי מא לא יגוז
 כונה מנהם. פבקולה להם וסעדו לבכם וקולהם לה כן תעשה 5 בר יח

said”—this indicates that eating was not impossible for them, but rather, was possible for them. Next, what is even more surprising than that, is that this was not actual eating, but was rather (the product of) delusion and deception. In this case, the
 5 angels are deemed capable of misrepresentation, and Abraham is deemed susceptible to this (misrepresentation) as well as that he imagined something as it was not.

[Temporary Human Garb for Angels]

Others said that when God wants to send one of the living,
 10 speaking, rational angels to humans, he clothes him with an earthly body that pulls him downwards, and then he sends him to one of his prophets. Once he has conveyed his message to him, the earthly body is removed from him, and once it is taken from him, he begins to ascend, via the nature of the heavenly
 15 body, into the skies. Once he arrives there, he doffs his heavenly body, and becomes part of the world of the rational intellect. In this respect, (the angel's) trajectory is identical with what the philosophers assert regarding the soul and the intellect, viz. their descent together downward, towards the world of the
 20 senses, their donning of the body, and their use of nature, until they took full benefit from it, in their (= the philosophers') opinion. Then they departed from it (back) to the world of the rational intellect.

If this is the case, then it is possible that when the angel
 25 came to the earth, that God arranged within him an apparatus for the purposes of eating and nourishment, and in this way, they eat and drink. For this purpose, (God) clothes him with two

כאשר דברת דל עלי אן אלאכל גיר ממתנע מנהם בל קד יגוז מנהם. תם אעגב מן דלך אנה לם יכן דלך אכלא באלחקיקה ואנמא כאן איהאם ותכייל פאגאז עלי אלמלאיכה אלתמויה ועלי אברהים אן דלך גאז עליה ואנה אוהם אלשי עלי גיר חקיקתה. ⁵

וקאל אכרון אן אלמלאיכה אלאחיא אלנטק אלעקליה אדא אראד אללה תע' יוגה באחד מנהם אלי אלכלק פאנה יכסוה גרמא ארצ'א גאדבא אלי אלספל, פיבעת בה אלי נבי מן אנביאה חתי אדא אדי אליה רסאלתה כלע ענה אלגרם ¹⁰ אלארצ', פאדא אנתזע מנה צאר שכך בטבאע אלגרם אלסמאיי אלי אלסמא חתי אדא צאר אלי הנאך תערי מן | ^{פל 165} גרמה אלסמאיי פחצל פי עאלם אלעקל. ואן סבילה פי דלך סביל מא אדעתה אלפלסאספה ען אלנפס ואלעקל מן ¹⁵ הבוטהמא גמיעא ספלא נחו עאלם אלחס ותרדיהא באלגסד ואסתעמאלהא אלטביעה חתי אדא אסתפאדא ענדהם מא פיהא שכצא ענהא אלי עאלם אלעקל.

ואדא כאן דלך כדלך לם ינבר אן יכון אלמלאך אדא צאר אלי אלארץ אן ירכב אללה פיה אלה לאסתעמאל ²⁰ אלאכל ואלתגדי פיאכל בהא וישרב, במא כסאה קבל מצירה

bodies before his arrival on earth, a heavenly body and an earthly earth-attracting body. That (earthly) body has the capability of digesting all of the food that he might eat, in its entirety, and rid himself of it, without the need for bowel
5 movements and without the occurrence of impurity.

[One Angel, Two Men]

However one of the Karaite scholars stated something which by implication could be taken to mean that one of the three was an angel and that two of them were men. (He
10 explained) that Abraham began speaking to the angel among them, when he said “My lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight,” and this is also the referent of “The LORD appeared to him,” which means that he (= God) appeared to him via the sending of that angel. After he said “Do not go on past your
15 servant,” he turned to the other two, who were men, and said to them “Let a little water be brought” and the rest of what he said, Gen. 18.4 until the point when they said to him, “Do as you have said.” Gen. 18.5 These two were the ones who ate (Abraham’s proffered food), not the third. Then the two said to him, “Where is your wife
20 Sarah?” When he said to them “There, in the tent,” the third one, who was the angel, approached him and said to him, “I will return to you next year,” and he is the one who said to him, Gen. 18.10 “The LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh?’” Gen. 18.13

Do you not see how (Scripture) distinguishes in the
25 conversation, between plural and singular usages, and how when it mentions the singular, it says “the LORD” and when it uses the plural, it does not say this. This (division between angel and men) is further emphasised in that (Scripture) recounts

אלי אלארץ גסמין גסמא סמאייא וגסמא ארציא גדאבא, ויכון
 פי דלך אלגסס מן אלקוה מא יהצם דלך אלטעאם אלדי
 יאכלה באסרה ויפניה מן גיר אן יחתאג אלי גאיט ולא אלי
 חדות פלאדה.

5

פאמא בעץ אלעלמא מן אצחאבנא פאנה קאל פי דלך
 קולא בגיר תצריך יאול אלי אן אחד אלתלתה כאן מלאך
 ואלאתנין אנאס. ואן אברהים אבתדא אלמלאך מן בינהם

בקו' **אדני אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך** והו אלמקול פיה **וירא**

בר יח 3

בר יח 1

אליו יוי יריד אנה תראיא לה בתוגיה דלך אלמלאך ואנה |

פח ב38

בעד אן קאל לה **אל נא תעבור** אקבל עלי אלתנין אלאכר

אלדין המא אנאס פקאל להמא **יקח נא מעט מים** מע סאיר

בר יח 4

אלקול אלי אן קאלא לה **כן תעשה** והמא כאנא אלאכלין דון

בר יח 5

אלתאלת. תם קאלא לה אלתנין **איה שרה אשתך?** פלמא |

בר יח 9

פל 166א

קאל להמא **הנה באהל** אקבל עליה אלתאלת אלדי הו

15

אלמלאך פקאל לה **שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה** והו אלדי קאל

בר יח 10

לה **ויאמר יוי אל אברהם למה זה צחקה שרה לאמר.**

בר יח 13

אפלא תרי כף יפרק בין אלמכאטבה באלגמע אלי

אלמכאטבה באלפראד ואנה אדא דכר אלפראד קאל פי דלך

יוי ואדא דכר אלגמע לס יקל דלך. תם אכד דלך באן אכבר

20

regarding the two, that they went to Sodom, while the angel remained, and regarding him it says **“And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham?’”** and for this reason it says **“Abraham remained standing there before the LORD.”** Gen. 18.17 Gen. 18.22

- 5 He (= the Karaite scholar) further explained that he (= the angel) was grouped with them (= the two men) and named together with them, in the phrase **“three men,”** similar to Gen. 18.2 the aforementioned explanation⁴ **“and six men.”** This is also Ezek. 9.2 similar to **“and he saw a man standing before him,”** also stating Josh. 5.13
10 that he was the **“captain of the LORD’s host.”**⁵ We have stated Josh. 5.14 that many similar instances exist.

There is another plausible explanation that has been stated regarding those three men, which is that they were sent regarding three (distinct) issues.⁶ They might all be angels or
15 prophets, or one of them could be an angel according to what we have stated, and two of them prophets. The one who is an angel close to God was sent to Abraham in particular, to announce (the birth of) Isaac, and to inform him what (God) was about to carry out in Sodom. The other two were prophets,
20 sent to Sodom for two reasons as well. One of them was to save Lot; the other was to destroy Sodom entirely. One who contemplates the narrative in its entirety till its end, will find this to be one of the most convincing explanations of this issue.

⁴ That is, in the author’s own commentary above, in the initial discussion of the use of the Hebrew ‘men’ to mean ‘angels’.

⁵ And thus an angel, despite being referred to with the word ‘man’.

⁶ This view echoes the the midrash in Genesis Rabba 50.2, which details three angels with three distinct tasks.

אן אלאַתנין צארא אלי סדם ובקי אלמלאך וקאל פיה **ויוי אמר** בר יח 17
המכסה אני מאברהם ולדלך קאל ואברהם עודנו עומד לפני בר יח 22
יוי.

קאל פאדכל פי גמלתהם באן אסם מעהם לקו' **שלשה** בר יח 2
אנשים נטיר למא תקדם מן אלקול **והנה ששה אנשים** ודלך יח ט 2
איצא נטיר לקו' פי יהושע והנה איש עומד לנגדו ואכבר באנה יהוה 13
שר צבא יוי. וקד קלנא אן לדלך נטאיר כתיר.

וקד קיל פי אמר הולאי אלתלתה אלנפר קולא גיר בעיד,
 והו אנהם כאנו מוגהין פי תלתה אמור. פאמא אן יכונו
 באסרהם מלאיכה או אנביא או ואחד מנהם מלאך עלי מא 10
 קלנא, ואתנין אנביא. פכאן | אחדהם אלדי הו אלמלאך 12א פב
 אלמקרב מבעותא אלי אברהים כאצה ליבשרה באסחק
 וליערפה מא יריד יפעלה בסדם. וכאן אלאַתנין אלאכרין | 166ב פל
 אלדין המא נביין מבעותין אלי סדום לאמרין איצא, אחדהמא
 לכלאץ לוט ואלאכר לאקלאב סדום ואהלאכהא. ומן תאמל 15
 אלקצה באסרהא אלי אכרהא יגד אלקול קריבא ממא קיל פי
 דלך.

12 אלמקרב] פב ליתא | 14 אלדין המא] פב ליתא | 15 ואהלאכהא] פב ליתא |
 16 באסרהא] פב ליתא | ממא...דלך] פב ליתא

If someone asks, saying, Tell me, when God sends an angel to a person, does that person of necessity realise that it is an angel, or not? We answer that (at times) one might realise this and (at other times) one might not.

5 [Narrative Continuation]

We return to the explanation of the rest of the account, and it is the statement “**They said to him, Where is your wife Sarah?**” Gen. 18.9 They may have intended by this that she should hear their good news about her giving birth to Isaac. When he said to
10 them, “**There, in the tent,**” the angel among them said, “**I will** Gen. 18.10
return to you next year.”

“**Sarah was listening**”: This is because when they asked Gen. 18.10 about her, she stood behind the entrance in order to hear and find out why they asked about her and what they were going to
15 say about her. When they announced the good news, she laughed in joy, happiness and surprise, because this was a sign and a miracle. The angel reproached (her) for this, saying, “**Why** Gen. 18.13
did Sarah laugh?”

[Did Sarah Lie?]

20 If someone says, If Scripture recounted that she laughed, and the angel said ‘Why did she laugh?’ then how is it possible for (Sarah) to deny this, saying “**I did not laugh**”? This has two Gen. 18.15

וּאֵן סַאֵל סַאֵל פִּקַּאֵל כְּבִרּוּנִי אֲדָא בַּעַת אֲלֵלָה בַּמִּלְאָד
אֵלִי אֲנִסְאֵן הֵל יִגְבַּ אֵן יִכּוֹן דְּלִךְ אֲלֵאֲנִסְאֵן יַעֲלֵם אִנְהָ מֶלֶךְ אִם
לֹא? קִלְנָא קִד יַעֲלֵם וְקִד לֹא יַעֲלֵם.

5 נִרְגַּע אֵלִי שֶׁרַח בִּאֲקִי אֲלִקְצָה וְהוּ קו' **וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִיהָ** בֵּר י"ח 9
שֶׁרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ. יִגְזוּ אֵן יִכּוֹנוּ אֲרֵאדוּ בְּדִלְךְ אֵן תִּסְמַע מֵא יִבְשֶׁרוֹן
בֵּה מִן וּלְאֲדִתָּהָ לֹאֲסַחֲקָ. פִּלְמָא קִאֵל לֵהֶם **הִנֵּה בִּאֵהָל** קִאֵל
לָה אֲלִמְלָאֵךְ מִנְהֶם **שׁוּב אֲשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ וְג'** | פ"ח א 39
10 בֵּר י"ח 10

10 **וַשֶּׁרָה שׁוֹמַעַת וְג'** וְדִלְךְ אִנְהֶם לְמָא סַאֵלוּ עֲנָהָ וְקִפְתָּ
10 וְרָא אֲלִבְאָב לְתִסְמַע וְתַעֲלֵם לִם סַאֵלוּ עֲנָהָ וּמָא אֲלֵדִי יִרִידוֹן
יִקּוּלוֹן פִּי אֲמַרְהָ. פִּלְמָא בִּשְׁרוּ בִּאֲלִבְשָׁאֲרָה צִחְכַּת סִרּוּרָא
וּפִרְחָא וְתַעֲגֹבָא אֲדָא כֹּאֵן פִּי דְלִךְ אִיהָ וְאֲעִגּוּבָהּ, פִּאֲנִכֵּר דְלִךְ
אֲלִמְלָאֵךְ בְּקו' **לְמָה זֶה צִחְקָה שֶׁרָה לֵאמֹר**.
13 בֵּר י"ח 13

15 פִּאֵן קִאֵל קִאֵל פִּאֲדָא כֹּאֵן אֲלִנֵּץ קִד אֲכַבֵּר אִנְהָ צִחְכַּת
וְקִאֵל אֲלִמְלָאֵךְ לִם צִחְכַּת, פִּכִּיף גִּאֲזוּ לֵהָא אֵן תִּגְחַד דְלִךְ
פִּתְקוֹל **לֹא צִחְקָתִי**? וְפִי הִדָּא צִרְבִּין מִן אֲלִנְכִיר. אֲחַדְהֵמָא
15 בֵּר י"ח 15

1 וּאֵן... 3 יַעֲלֵם² | **פב** לִיתָא | 3 לֹא קִלְנָא | **פח**, **פל** לִיתָא, הוּשֵׁלִם עַל פִּי הֶהְקֶשֶׁר. |
6 בְּדִלְךְ | **פב** לִיתָא | 7 מִן וּלְאֲדִתָּהָ | **פב** בּוֹלְאֲדִתָּהָ | 10 וְתַעֲלֵם | **פב** לִיתָא | וּמָא...
אֲמַרְהָ | **פב** לִיתָא | 12 וּפִרְחָא | **פב** לִיתָא | 16 דְלִךְ | **פד** לִיתָא | 17 אֲחַדְהֵמָא...
וּבִהַתָּת | **פב** אֲחַדְהֵמָא כְּדָב וּבִהַתָּת

repugnant aspects. The first is that she lied and dissimulated, and the righteous and the upright do not lie and dissimulate. The second is her impression that she could succeed in doing so, with angels and prophets. This would be attempted only by an
 5 extreme fool.

I would answer regarding this, that laughter is of a variety of types, including happiness, surprise, or scoffing at something one hears or sees. We have stated that Sarah's laugh derived from joy and surprise. This is demonstrated by her statement
 10 "**Shall I in truth bear a child, as old as I am?**" When the angel Gen. 18.13 reproached her, saying "**Why did Sarah laugh?**", she became afraid and anxious due to his reproach, as indicated by the verse "**for she was frightened.**" This is the way of the righteous; if they Gen. 18.15 are rebuked by someone who is superior to them, they fear this
 15 greatly.

Therefore she first attempted to excuse herself and said "**I** Gen. 18.15 **did not laugh,**" meaning 'I did not laugh in the inappropriate way, which would have been scorn or repulsion, expressing that I did not have faith in that issue or that promise, but rather, it
 20 was a laugh of joy and surprise.' Then he said to her, "**You did** Gen. 18.15 **laugh,**" meaning that even if it was like you said, you indeed laughed. You should not have done that, but rather, when you heard the good news, instead of laughter and joy, you should have been filled with awe, fear and thanks to God, the Exalted,

1 dissimulated] Blau (2006, 53).

אנהא כדבת ובהתת וליס אלכדב ואלבהת מן פעל אלצלחא
 פל 167א | ואלאבראר. ואלב' תוהמהא | אנהא אדא פעלת דלך אנה יגוז
 להא דלך עלי אלמלאיכה ואלאנביא, והדא לא יפעלה אלא
 מן קד אפרט פיה אלגהל.

5 פקד אגבת פי דלך באן אלצחך קד יכון עלי גהאת,
 מנהא סרור ומנהא תעגב ומנהא אסתהזי באלשי אלמסמוע
 או אלמנטור. וקד קלנא אן צחך שרה כאן פרחא ותעגבא. ידל
 עלי דלך קולהא **האף אמנס אלד ואני זקנתי?** פלמא וקע
 עליהא אלנכיר מן אלמלאך בקו' **למה זה צחקה שרה,** וקע
 10 עליהא אלכוף ואלגזע מן אנכארה עליהא לקו' **כי יראה.**
 בר יח 15 וכדלך סביל אלצלחא אדא וקע בהם עדל ממן הו אעלי מנהם
 פב 12א | אן יהאבו | דלך ויכשון מנה.

פבאדרת באלאעתנדאר פקאלת **לא צחקתי.** אראדת אן
 15 לם אצחך עלי אלגהא אלמדמומה אלתי הי אלאסתהזי או
 אלאנכאר באני לם אתק בהדא אלאמר והדא אלועד, ואנמא
 כאן דלך צחך פרח ותעגב. פקאל להא **לא כי צחקת** ואן כאן
 15 דלך עלי מא תקולין פקד צחכת עלי כל חאל. וקד כאן יגב אן
 לא תפעלין דלך בל כאן יגב ענד מא סמעת מא בשרת בה אן
 תנצרפין ען אלאשתגאל באלצחך ואלפרח אלי אלהיבה

2 אנה] פב ליתא | 3 להא דלך] פב ליתא | והדא...אלגהל] פב ליתא | 6 מנהא...
 אלמנטור] פב מנה סרור ומנה תעגב ומנה תהזי | 9 בקו'...שרה] פב ליתא |
 10 ואלגזע...יראה] פב ליתא | 12 מנה] פב ליתא | 13 אראדת] פב ליתא | 15 והדא
 אלועד] פב ליתא | 16 ותעגב] פב ליתא | 17 דלך] פב ליתא

for what he granted you and for the sign and miracle he established for your sake. (In this way,) she was correct in her statement in saying ‘I did not laugh’ according to the meaning that she had intended and mentioned, while Scripture and the
 5 angel were correct, regarding the fact that she did laugh, according to the other explanation that we have mentioned.

In contrast, the description of Abraham, “**and he laughed,**” Gen. 17.17 is preceded by a verse that demonstrates that his laughter and joy follow after thanksgiving, which preceded (them), as well as
 10 prostration to God, the Exalted, since it says “**Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed.**” Given that thanksgiving to God preceded, and joy followed, in contrast to what she (= Sarah) did, (Abraham) was not reproached.

Some exegetes add another explanation here, claiming
 15 that the angel’s statement, “**Why did Sarah laugh?**” was neither Gen. 18.13 reproach nor blame, but rather this was a notification intended to demonstrate the truth of what he had reported, that Sarah would give birth a year later, and he established that as a proof and an indicator.

20 [Abraham Merits Revelation]

“**Now the LORD had said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham’**” and Gen. 18.17 the rest of the narrative: Via this statement, (Scripture) made known Abraham’s great degree of favour, for which he merited (God’s) revealing to him the secret of what he planned to do to
 25 Sodom. This is like the statement “**Indeed, my LORD God does**” Amos 3.7

ואלכוף ואלשכר ללה גל ועז עלי מא קד מנחך ואקאמה לך
 מן אלאיה אלעגיבה. פכאנת הי צאדקה מן קולהא אן | לם
 אצחך עלי אלמעני אלדי קצדתה ואכברת בה, וכאן אלכתאב
 ואלמלאך צאדקין פי אנהא צחכת עלי אלמעני אלאכר אלדי
 5 דכרנאה.

פאמא קו' פי אברהם ויצחק פאנה | קד תקדמה קול דל
 פח 39 ב 17 בר ז
 בה עלי אן צחכה ופרחה בעקב שכר תקדם וסגוד ללה גל ועז
 אד יקול ויפול אברהם על פניו ויצחק. פלמא קדם אלשכר
 ללה ואעקבה באלסרור בכלאף פעלהא, לם יקע בה עדל.

וקד אצאף קום מע הדא אלקול קול אכר והו אן זעמו אן
 קול אלמלאך למה זה צחקה שרה לם יכן עדל ולא לום,
 13 בר יח
 ואנמא כאן דלך מנה אכבאר בעקב מא אראד ידל בה עלי
 צחה מא אכבר בה, מן אן שרה תלד בעד חול, פגעל דלך
 ברהאן ודליל.

ויוי אמר המכסה אני מאברהם וסאיר אלקצה. אעלם
 17 בר יח
 בהדא אלקול מא עליה אברהם מן אלפצל אלדי יוגב לה אן
 יכשף לה אלסר אלדי יריד אללה אן יחלה בסדם ודלך נטיר
 קו' כי לא יעשה יוי אלהים דבר כי אם גלה סודו אל עבדיו
 עמ ג 7

1 עלי... אלעגיבה] פב ליתא | 2 מן קולהא] פב ליתא | 3 עלי... בה] פב ליתא | 4 עלי...
 דכרנאה] פב ליתא | 7 תקדם] פב ליתא | 9 ללה] פב ליתא | 10 וקד... 14 ודליל] פב
 ליתא | 18 אללה] פב ליתא

nothing without having revealed His purpose to His servants, the prophets,” as well as “The counsel of the LORD is for those who fear Him; to them He makes known His covenant.” It is possible that (God) made this known to Abraham in order to
5 notify his children of the calamities that are brought upon sinners, so that they and their descendants would refrain from committing sins.

The following verse confirms this, saying, “Since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation.” (Scripture) explains
10 that it is prudent to make this plain to Abraham and not to hide it from him, because by making it plain to him, this will encourage him to promote the requirement of obeying God among his family and household, as it says, “For I have singled
15 if I inform him, that he would do this, and that this would be the reason for the fulfillment of what I promised him, as (Scripture) says, “In order that the LORD may bring about for Abraham.”

הנביאים ואיצא סוד יוי ליראיו ובריתו להודיעם. ויגוז אנ יכון תה כה 14
 אראד באעלאם דלך לאברהם אנ יכון פיה תעריף לאולאדה
 מא יסתחקה אלעצאה מן חלול אלבלא אלעטים פינזגרון
 בדלך ען פעל אלמעאצי הם וגמיע אתבאעהם.

5 יוכד דלך קו' בעקב דלך ואברהם היו יהיה לגוי גדול בר יח 18
 פל 168א | ועצום | פאכבר אנ מן אלחכמה אטהאר דלך לאברהם ואן
 לא יכפיה ענה אד כאן פי אטהארה לה מא יחתה עלי אנ
 יתקדם אלי בניה ואהל ביתה בלזום טאעה אללה, | כמא קאל פב 12ב סוף
 כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו אי אני קד עלמת אני אדא בר יח 19
 10 אכברתה אנה סיפעל דלך ואן דלך יכון סבבא לתמאם מא
 ועדתה בה כמא קאל למען הביא יוי על אברהם.

YŪSUF IBN NŪḤ AND YŪSUF IBN BAḤTAWAYH: ONE GRAMMARIAN OR TWO?*

Nadia Vidro

Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ was one of the most important medieval Karaite grammarians (Skoss 1927, 4–11; Khan 2000a, 5–25; 2014, 15–25; Goldstein 2011, 12–14). Active in Jerusalem in the second half of the tenth and early eleventh centuries, he was the founder of the city’s famous Karaite house of study (*dār al-‘ilm*). Ibn Nūḥ composed a number of Bible commentaries, including a grammatical commentary known as *Al-Diqduq* ‘Grammar’ or *Nukat al-Diqduq* ‘Points of Grammar’ (ed. Khan 2000a), as well as a commentary on the Pentateuch which has survived in an adaptation, *Talḥiṣ*, prepared by Ibn Nūḥ’s student Abū al-Faraj Hārūn (Goldstein 2011; Schwarb 2014).

Today, scholars generally, albeit cautiously, agree that Ibn Nūḥ was identical with Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥtawayh, a Kar-

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aite scholar who had a compound (*ḥaṣer*) in Jerusalem and composed a work on grammar entitled *Al-Diqduq* (Khan 2000a, 7; Wechsler 2008, 40 fn. 110; Goldstein 2011, 12 fn. 43, 14; Zawanowska 2012, 104–5; Lasker 2022, 37; on Ibn Baḥṭawayh see also Pinsker 1860, 62, קי; Poznanski 1907–1913; Mann 1935, 29–30). Nineteenth-century scholars were less unanimous regarding the identity of these two Karaites. It was postulated by Bacher (1895, 251), but declared merely conjectural by Poznanski (1896a, 699; 1896b, 215 fn. 4; 1907–1913). Poznanski's scepticism seems justified in the light of Ibn Baḥṭawayh's understanding of the forms בָּאֲחָד (Gen. 3.22) and הִתְאַחֲדִי (Ezek. 21.21), which differs from the analysis in the *Talḥiṣ* and in Ibn Nūḥ's *Diqduq*. Gen. 3.22 reads וַיֹּאמֶר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה בָּאֲחָד מִמֶּנּוּ לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע. In the *Talḥiṣ*, the form בָּאֲחָד is translated 'like one' (Goldstein 2011, 166, 184). In contrast, Ibn Baḥṭawayh understood אָחַד as a verb meaning 'take', based on the Aramaic root אַח"ד, which can mean 'seize, capture'. He translated הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה בָּאֲחָד מִמֶּנּוּ as 'when Adam took from the tree' (as reported by Yefet ben 'Eli in his commentary *ad loc*, IOS B 51, fols 171r–171v; Munk 1851, 61 fn. 1).¹ Yefet, furthermore, relayed that Ibn Baḥṭawayh expounded the phrase הִתְאַחֲדִי הַיָּמִי הַשְּׁמִי'לִי in Ezek. 21.21 as follows:

Be seized (אֲתֹאכְדִי)² in the hand, O the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, and put your edge to the neck. Strike on the right

¹ Note, however, that Goldstein (2011, 60) identified some exegetical parallels in their interpretation of Gen. 3.22.

² This reading in IOS B 51, fol. 171v is also found in RNL Evr Arab I 22, fol. 73v. Munk (1851, 61 fn. 1) reads اأخذى.

of the neck, strike on the left of the neck until the jugular veins and the throat are cut. (IOS B 51, fol. 171v; Munk 1851, 61 fn. 1)

The *Diqduq* suggests two alternatives:

It is said that its interpretation is ‘become one’, and it is said ‘be seized (אֶנְכֹלֶךָ)’, namely, the killer will seize you and kill the people by (using) you. (edited and translated in Haim 2020, 132)

While the translation ‘be seized’ is given in both sources, the longer interpretations are not very similar. For example, in Ibn Baḥṭawayh’s more poetic version, the sword is the agent, whereas in the *Diqduq*, it is simply the instrument. These cases make questionable the identity of Ibn Nūḥ and Ibn Baḥṭawayh. Zawadowska (2012, 105) also observed that Yefet ben ‘Eli, who tended to agree with interpretations given in the *Talḥiṣ*, dissociated himself from Ibn Baḥṭawayh’s view on Gen. 3.22.

In this article I will address the question of Ibn Nūḥ’s identity with Ibn Baḥṭawayh by looking at an intra-Karaite polemic on the calendar that refers to Ibn Baḥṭawayh. Passages from two different versions of this polemic were published by Poznanski, Margoliouth, and Mann:

(a) As for language, you have nothing on it. But the book on it was by Sa‘īd Shirān, may God have mercy upon him. He was in this [discipline] a student of Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥṭawayh, the teacher of the Diaspora, may God be pleased with him.... I heard you one day disparage the teacher Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥṭawayh, may God be

pleased with him, and say that he was a corrupt³ man. However, people think that he was a brilliant luminary, may God increase his lot. (Poznanski 1896a, 698–99; Margoliouth 1899–1935, 3:513)

(b) As for language, [you have only] what you took from dictation from the book by Saʿīd Shirān, may God have mercy upon him. He was a student of our teacher Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥṭawayh, may God be pleased with him. We have his book *Al-Diqduq*, which our young people had learned from, but that has become lost from our elders. (Mann 1935, 30)

Neither Poznanski, Margoliouth, nor Mann attempted to establish the author and addressee of these passages. In this article I argue that the passages address Ibn Nūḥ and stem from a polemic composed against him by Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ, a tenth-century Karaite scholar active in Jerusalem (Goldstein 2010 and the references cited there). This precludes the possibility that Ibn Baḥṭawayh was another name of Ibn Nūḥ and calls for a re-evaluation of what we know about these grammarians.

1.0. The Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'aviv

Passage (a), above, is from BL Or 2523, which contains an intra-Karaite polemic on the calendar (on fols 47r–88v),⁴ more specifically on the Karaite method of intercalation by observing the ripening of barley ('aviv) (see below, §2.0). The structure of the

³ The manuscript reads מפסד 'one who expounds'; my translation follows Poznanski's emendation מפסד.

⁴ Poznanski (1896a, 698) erroneously believed that this polemic was against a Rabbanite author.

polemic is as follows. One person, whom I shall call ‘the Author’, composed a book on the *’aviv*. His opponent, whom I shall call ‘the Polemicist’, understood the Author’s book as an attack on the Polemicist’s views and composed a refutation of it. This refutation is the polemic in BL Or 2523. In it the Polemicist cites portions from the Author’s book and tackles each portion on multiple levels of ideas, style, definitions, etc. The Polemicist often attacks the Author personally and writes very harshly. BL Or 2523, fol. 58r, describes a disputation between the Author and the Polemicist on the subjects of calendar, grammar, analogy, and the oneness of God and mentions books on these subjects that the Author either composed or was planning at the time of the disputation (see below, §4.0.). This description is the source of passage (a).

Passage (b) is from RNL Evr Arab I 3177, which on fols 11r–25v contains an intra-Karaite polemic on the *’aviv* very similar to the polemic in BL Or 2523.⁵ It covers the same topics, has the same structure and style, expresses the same opinions, and describes on fol. 25v the same disputation between the Author and the Polemicist and the same set of the Author’s existing and planned writings. This description is the source of passage (b). RNL Evr Arab I 3177 is currently identified as a Commentary on Exodus or *Sefer Dinim* by Sahl ben Maṣṣīah (David Sklare p.c.). The commentary and the polemic are in the same hand, but it is not entirely clear if they belong to the same work. This is because there is no direct textual continuity between them, due to the loss of a number of manuscript leaves.

⁵ The close relationship between these two texts was pointed out already by Mann (1935, 30).

RNL Evr Arab I 3177 and BL Or 2523, which represent two different versions of the polemic, are in the same hand. Other parts of the polemic are RNL Evr Arab I 1163 and RNL Evr Arab II 3105, also in the same hand. They appear to belong to the version in BL Or 2523. In the following, I will refer to both versions of the Polemicist's work collectively as the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv* (in short, the *Polemic*).

2.0. The 'aviv Method

In Karaite literature, 'aviv refers to an advanced stage in the ripening of crops, specifically barley (Exod. 9.31; Lev. 2.14). It played a central role in the Karaite calendar. In this calendar, years were intercalated—i.e., a thirteenth month was inserted so that Passover would be celebrated in the correct season—based on the state of ripeness of the barley crops. The main biblical proof-text for this method was “Observe the month of 'aviv and keep the Passover to the LORD your God” (Deut. 16.1). The basic principle of the Karaite 'aviv-based intercalation was as follows: barley fields in Palestine were examined twelve months after the beginning of the previous Nisan. If barley in the state of 'aviv was found, the month was declared Nisan, and Passover was celebrated. Otherwise, the year was intercalated. While most Karaites agreed that this was the correct way of observing the biblical injunction, they argued about the particulars of the method: what stage in the ripening of barley is called 'aviv? When, where, and how much barley in this stage should be found in order to celebrate Passover? Karaites also disagreed about the meaning of the word *qaṣir* ‘harvest’, as it applied to barley brought for the sheaf

offering (Lev. 23.10). These questions are at the heart of the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv*. The different answers given to them by the Author and the Polemicist will guide my identification of these scholars.

3.0. Arguments for the Identification of the Author and the Polemicist

In this section I will provide evidence that the Polemicist, who composed the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv*, was Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ and that the Author of the original book on the 'aviv, against whom the *Polemic* was written, was Ibn Nūḥ. That such a polemic existed is suggested by Ibn al-Hītī, who mentioned that Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ “has argued against him [Ibn Nūḥ] extensively with regard to 'aviv” (Margoliouth 1897, 433 [text], 438 [translation]; see also Nemoy 1955, 231).

3.1. General Information about the Disputants

The *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv* contains the following information about the Author and the Polemicist. Both were based in Jerusalem, the Polemicist living there longer than the Author (RNL Evr Arab II 3105, fol. 1v; BL Or 2523, fols 82v–83r, 86r; Margoliouth 1899–1935, 3:513). The Polemicist wrote a *Book of Commandments*, whereas the Author did not (BL Or 2523, fol. 83r; RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fols 11r, 13r). These facts fit the proposed disputants: both were active in Jerusalem, Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ composed a *Book of Commandments* (Harkavy 1970, I:197–204), while Ibn Nūḥ is not known to have composed one. Furthermore, the *Talḥiṣ* refers to a book on the 'aviv composed by either Ibn

Nūḥ or Abū al-Faraj Hārūn (RNL Evr Arab I 1754, fols 168v, 496r).

3.2. A Quotation from Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's Refutation of Ibn Nūḥ in Ibn al-Hītī's *Chronicle of Karaite Doctors*

Ibn al-Hītī quoted a short phrase from Sahl b. Maṣṣliḥ's refutation of Ibn Nūḥ (Margoliouth 1897, 433): מא כרגת בשפת עלי אלאביב: פכין אכבר צורתה. In their translations of the *Chronicle* both Margoliouth and Nemoy parsed כרגת and בשפת as first-person forms and understood this phrase as Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's confession that he did not know the true shape of 'aviv barley (Margoliouth 1897, 439 and fn. 10; Nemoy 1955, 232). Although this parsing is suggested by the first-person form אכבר, it is unlikely, because Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's well-defined views on what constitutes 'aviv barley are documented both in his own *Book of Commandments* (RNL Evr Arab I 3315, fols 1r–2v; RNL Evr Arab I 823, fol. 27v) and in Levi ben Yefet's *Book of Differences between Yefet ben 'Eli and Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ* (BL Or 2573, fol. 13r). It is more likely that the first-person form אכבר in the surviving nineteenth-century copy of Ibn al-Hītī's *Chronicle* is a scribal error for the second-person form תכבר and that the phrase is intended to accuse Ibn Nūḥ of not going out to examine barley and not knowing its true shape: "You have not gone out to examine the 'aviv. How, then, can you report on its shape?" This interpretation is supported by the fact that the *Talḥiṣ* does not explain which barley ripening stage is called 'aviv.

The same accusation is levelled by the Polemicist against the Author in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv*:

You are not one of those who go out to seek [the 'aviv] (מִן (יִכְרֹג פִּי אֶלְטֵלֵב), so that you would hear and understand and know [the difference] between the shape (צוּרָה) of the 'aviv that is intact and that is not (RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fol. 24v).⁶

The phrases in Ibn al-Hītī's *Chronicle* and in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv* are similar in meaning, tone and wording. It is feasible that they are related to the same dispute. They are not identical, and the exact phrase in the *Chronicle* could not be found in the surviving text of the *Polemic*. However, the *Polemic* is fragmentary. Besides, it is not clear if Ibn al-Hītī's phrase is a direct quotation. The verb כָּשַׁף for examining the state of barley is common in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources, whereas tenth- and eleventh-century authors almost exclusively use טֵלֵב.

3.3. A rejoinder to Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's Critique of a Book on the 'aviv

T-S Misc.8.89 contains a rejoinder to Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's critique of a book on the 'aviv composed by the author of that original book. The rejoinder quotes Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ's arguments and counters them. Importantly, it explicitly names Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ by his *kunya* 'teknonym' Abū al-Sarī. The contents of the rejoinder are closely related to the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv*, as is shown here in a page-by-page analysis of the fragment. T-S

⁶ Other references to the Author's failure to go out to examine the 'aviv are made in RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fols 43r, 48v.

Misc.8.89 verso, left–recto, right, refers to Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ’s accusation that the original book did not fully present his arguments and explains that the book did not focus on Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ’s method to the exclusion of others:

Then he [Abū al-Sarī] said: “Moreover, I saw that you mentioned what the supporters of our [method] say without fully presenting their arguments.” ... It should be said to Abū al-Sarī: “I did not report these statements from what you say or what the supporters of your [method] say. I just reported [them] from him who says them and refuted him.” ... In some places I said: “If one says so-and-so.” And in other places I said: “If one says so-and-so... You and those who follow you are not the only fools!”

Similar accusations are voiced by the Polemicist in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ’Aviv*, e.g.:

I saw that you left out the methods of many people and did not mention them. I do not know why you left them out and aimed [your book] at our method and yours. You did not fully present our method, nor your method. And likewise, you did not give a comprehensive description of [all] methods of the people. (RNL Evr Arab II 3105, fol. 1r)

T-S Misc.8.89 recto, right, states that Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ discussed in his critique the following views, which the original author rejected: (1) *’aviv* barley must be present in the beginning of the thirteenth month; (2) the term *’aviv* applies to yellow barley; (3) the term *qaṣir* applies to barley that is white and dry; (4) the word *qaṣir* is a verbal noun. These subjects map exactly onto the subjects of the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ’Aviv*, where the Author

disagrees with the same four views and the Polemicist defends the first three and offers his own opinion on the form *qaṣir*.⁷

T-S Misc.8.89 recto, left–verso, right, deals with the phrase ‘month of *ʿaviv*’ (Deut. 16.1). It argues against Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ’s position that *ʿaviv* barley is the ‘indicator’ (*dalīl*) of the month of *ʿaviv* and that it must be present from the beginning of the month in order to call a month—‘month of *ʿaviv*’ (because the indicator must always precede the indicated). The writer of the rejoinder defined *ʿaviv* as a ‘sign’ (*ʿalāma*) rather than an ‘indicator’ and believed that it does not need to be present from the beginning of the month. The exact same opinions and terms are attested in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ʿAviv*, where the Polemicist’s view aligns with that of Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ, and the Author’s with that of the writer of T-S Misc.8.89 (see, e.g., RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fols 10v and 9v–10r, respectively; see also below, §3.5.).

The parallels between T-S Misc.8.89 and the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ʿAviv* are a strong indication that these two texts relate to the same dispute and that the Polemicist is Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ.

⁷ The manuscripts are in disorder and the following listing is approximate: the time when *ʿaviv* barley must be present—RNL Evr Arab II 3105; RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fols 1r–19r; RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fols 17r–23v; stages in the ripening of barley to which the terms *ʿaviv* and *qaṣir* can be correctly applied, and the required amount of barley in the correct stage—RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fols 19r–59v; BL Or 2523, fols 47r–82r, 85r–88v; RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fols 11r–13r, 15r–16v, 24r–25v; grammatical discussion of the form *qaṣir*—BL Or 2523, fols 82v–85r; RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fols 13r–14v.

3.4. The Polemicist's Opinions Regarding the 'aviv

A number of opinions regarding the 'aviv expressed by the Polemicist are known only from Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ's works.⁸ Thus, the Polemicist maintained that barley was ripe enough to be called 'aviv if, out of every ten ears in a handful of stalks, six were yellow, two were pistachio-coloured, and two were green, and if other fields were in a similar state (RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fol. 46r). He defined the smallest representative field as one that a pair of oxen can plough in a day (e.g., RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fol. 48v). These views are particular to Sahl ben Maṣṣliāḥ (*Book of Commandments*, RNL Evr Arab I 823, fol. 26r; Levi b. Yefet, *Book of Differences*, BL Or 2573, fols 19v–20r).

3.5. The Author's View Regarding the Time When 'aviv Must Be Present

The Bible stipulates that Passover must be celebrated in the “month of 'aviv” (Deut. 16.1). The Author opined that, in principle, a month could be called ‘month of 'aviv’ regardless of when 'aviv was found in it. However, due to religious obligations, he limited the permitted time and stipulated that, for purposes of declaring a ‘month of 'aviv’, there must be 'aviv before Passover on the fourteenth of the month and harvest-ripe barley (*qaṣir*) before the waving of the sheaf on the following Sunday (e.g., RNL

⁸ This conclusion is based on my study of Karaite works on the calendar in the framework on the project ‘Qaraite and Rabbanite Calendars: Origins, Interaction, and Polemic’ (UCL–LMU).

Evr Arab II 3105, fols 9r–9v, 11v, 7r, 7v–4r RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fols 5v, 32r).

Most Karaite scholars required the presence of 'aviv barley in or before the beginning of the month for declaration of 'the month of 'aviv'. The view that 'aviv may be found up to the middle of the month is unusual. The only Palestinian sources known to me that support this view are the *Talḥiṣ* (RNL Evr Arab I 1754, fols 168r–168v) and *Kitāb al-Istibṣār* by Yūsuf al-Baṣīr (RNL Evr Arab I 1170, fol. 31v).⁹ The *Talḥiṣ* reflects the views of Ibn Nūḥ as well as of Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, but the opinion that 'aviv may be found up to the middle of the month is explicitly attributed to 'the author of the book' (*ṣāḥib al-kitāb*), a reference to Ibn Nūḥ:

Take note that the elder Abū Ya'qūb al-Baṣīr, may God have mercy on him, initially followed the method of the author of the book, may God have mercy on him, namely that it is permissible for the finding of the 'aviv to be delayed until the fourteenth of the month. (RNL Evr Arab I 1754, fol. 168v)¹⁰

A comparison between the *Talḥiṣ*, *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*, and the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the 'Aviv* reveals closer parallels between the *Polemic* and the *Talḥiṣ*. The *Talḥiṣ* agrees with the Author that the month of 'aviv should be declared only when there is 'aviv before Passover and harvest-ripe barley (*qaṣīr*) before the waving

⁹ In Babylonia, this was also the opinion of Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī (Nemoy 1939–1943, 4:839–41, VII.18.2–5).

¹⁰ See also Yefet Ibn Ṣaghīr, *Book of Commandments*, discourse III, ch. 19, where this view is explicitly ascribed to Abū Ya'qūb ben Nūḥ (RNL Evr Arab II 974, fol. 77v).

of the sheaf (RNL Evr Arab I 1754, fols 168r–168v). In contrast, *Kitāb al-Istīḥṣār* stipulates that the decisive factor is the 'aviv, and harvest-ripe barley is not required (RNL Evr Arab I 1170, fol. 35r). This indicates that the Author is Ibn Nūḥ. It is relevant here that Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ reports having extensively argued against a supporter of this view in a *Kitāb al-Radd* (Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ, Commentary on Exodus, RNL Evr Arab I 1166, fol. 23v).

3.6. The Author's Rejection of Analogy in Exegetical and Legal Matters

The Author permitted reasoning by analogy (*qiyās*) in linguistic analysis, but not in exegetical and legal matters. This was repeatedly stressed by the Polemicist:

If you apply analogy in [matters of] language, then why do you not apply analogy in [matters of] meaning? You have no proof for [the use of] analogy in [language], and I do not know on what basis you prohibit it in law. (BL Or 2523, fol. 84v)

Your rejection of analogy and resorting to tradition and custom.... (BL Or 2523, fol. 76v)

You said [...] that he who interprets a verse by analogy with [another] verse or he who learns from a verse about [another] verse is an unbeliever. (BL Or 2523, fol. 62v)

While the use of legal syllogism was widespread in the Karaite tradition (Vajda 1946; Schwarb 2007, 92; Nemoy and Zajackowski 2012; Ravitsky 2017), the twelfth-century Byzantine Karaite Yehuda Hadassi reported that it was rejected by Ibn Nūḥ, whom Hadassi likened in this respect to Sa'adya Gaon (see also Poznanski 1896a, 699):

Sa'adya the Fayyumite said in his wisdom that analogy does not apply to law.... Yosef ben Nuḥ, may he rest in peace, followed the same path and said that one should not use analogy in law. (Hadassi 1836, alphabet 168, 64v)

There is someone who admits Scripture and consensus, but does not admit analogy. This is Yosef ben Nuḥ, may God have mercy on him. (Hadassi 1836, alphabet 169, 64v)

Hadassi's testimony, together with Ibn Nūḥ's extensive use of analogy in grammatical analysis (Khan 2000a, 40), supports the identification of the Author as Ibn Nūḥ.

4.0. Conclusions: A New Look at Ibn Nūḥ and Ibn Baḥṭawayh

On the collective strength of the arguments in §§3.1–6 it is probable that the Author is Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and the Polemicist Sahl ben Maṣliaḥ. Inasmuch as the Polemicist mentioned Ibn Baḥṭawayh when addressing the Author and pointed out that the Author was critical of Ibn Baḥṭawayh (see passage (a) above, in the introductory section), the Author, i.e., Ibn Nūḥ, could not have been identical with Ibn Baḥṭawayh.

If Ibn Baḥṭawayh was not simply another name for Ibn Nūḥ, it is necessary to keep separate what we know about these scholars. Ibn Baḥṭawayh had a compound (*ḥaṣer*) in Jerusalem, composed a work on grammar entitled *Al-Diqduq*, had a student by the name Sa'īd Shirān, and is mentioned in Karaite sources as 'a Babylonian', 'the teacher of the Diaspora', and 'a brilliant luminary' (Pinsker 1860, 62, קי; Poznanski 1896a, 698–99; 1907–1913; Mann 1935, 30; Khan 2000a, 7). One source also states that Ibn Baḥṭawayh composed a *Book of Commandments*, but it is

considered unreliable (Pinsker 1860, 62, קי; Poznanski 1896b, 215 fn. 4).

The dissociation between Ibn Baḥṭawayh and Ibn Nūḥ may permit establishing a *terminus ante quem* for Ibn Baḥṭawayh's death. Ibn Baḥṭawayh is mentioned with a blessing for the dead in Yefet ben 'Eli's commentary on Genesis, composed in the 960s, and on Daniel, composed after 988 CE (Munk 1851, 61 fn. 1; Margoliouth 1889, 151; on the date of composition of the commentaries see Margoliouth 1889, v; Ben-Shammai 1976, 31; Zawanowska 2012, 12). Assuming that Ibn Baḥṭawayh and Ibn Nūḥ were the same person, Goldstein (2011, 60) noted that the 960s were an improbably early date for Ibn Nūḥ's death and suggested that the blessing was added by a later scribe. While this is possible, it is not necessary. Note, for example, that Ibn al-Hitī drew conclusions about the chronological order of Karaite scholars from their use of blessings for the dead (Margoliouth 1897, 433–34 [text], 438–39, 440 [translation]), which suggests that he viewed them as authorial and did not expect later scribes to interfere with the text in this way. Following Ibn al-Hitī, we may assume that the blessing was added at the time of composition of the Genesis commentary, in the 960s, and regard this decade as the *terminus ante quem* for Ibn Baḥṭawayh's death.

The following is known about Ibn Nūḥ. He lived in Jerusalem for thirty years and founded there a house of study (*dār al-ʿilm*), he composed the grammatical Bible commentary *Al-Diqduq* and some other Bible commentaries, and was the teacher of Abū al-Faraj Hārūn and Yūsuf al-Baṣīr (Margoliouth 1897, 433–34

[text], 438–40 [translation]; Khan 2000a, 5–6). Other information given about him in research literature, e.g., that he came from outside Palestine and was the teacher of Saʿīd Shirān, is derived from sources on Ibn Baḥṭawayh and should not be deemed relevant to Ibn Nūḥ. The similarity between Saʿīd Shirān’s grammatical teachings and Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq* was previously explained on the grounds that Saʿīd Shirān belonged to the circle of Ibn Nūḥ (Khan 2000a, 7; 2000b, 17). It now appears that the influence went in the opposite direction, and it was Ibn Nūḥ who learned from Saʿīd Shirān’s book (see above, passage (b), in the introductory section). May it even be that the surviving commentary on Saʿīd Shirān’s work (ed. Khan 2000b; 2004) was authored by Ibn Nūḥ?

Ibn Nūḥ is primarily seen in research literature as a grammarian. The *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ʿAviv* attests that this was not his only scholarly occupation and definitely not his first. At the time of writing of the *Polemic*, Ibn Nūḥ’s engagement with language was limited to taking dictation from the book by Saʿīd Shirān (see above, passage (b), in the introductory section). By then he had already written a book on the ʿaviv, participated in many debates (*majālis*) on analogy with Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ, and was planning to write a book on the refutation of analogy, which may have been a long time in the making for an elder pledged to fast and make a charitable donation when it finally appeared (RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fol. 25v). Ibn Nūḥ’s scholarly interests and outputs are reflected in the following description of a disputation between Sahl ben Maṣṣliḥ and Ibn Nūḥ included in the *Polemic*:

We will leave this [discussion] with you until you compose another book, on the refutation of analogy, as you mentioned on the day of the disputation between you and me in the house of Abū Shaybah. You maintained that you would speak with us on the oneness of God, analogy, language, and 'aviv. As for 'aviv, there!—you composed a book on it. As for language, you have nothing on it. But the book on it was by Sa'īd Shirān, may God have mercy upon him. He was in this [discipline] a student of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥtawayh, the teacher of the Diaspora, may God be pleased with him. As for what you mentioned about the oneness of God, we are [still] waiting [to see] what you will produce. Perhaps, we will know our Lord from the book that you will write for us! Likewise, do apply yourself to your book on the refutation of analogy so that it is added to your book on the 'aviv, which you do not know.... Then you will have these two books that you mention (BL Or 2523, fol. 58r).¹¹

In addition, Sahl ben Maṣliāḥ also mentioned that Ibn Nūḥ considered *kalām* scholars and the Mu'tazila 'pillars of the world' (BL Or 2523, fol. 59v; RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fol. 2v) and reported that some thought Ibn Nūḥ 'discerning (*baṣīr*) in *kalām*' (RNL Evr Arab I 1163, fol. 36v). This fits well with the Mu'atazili leanings identified by Goldstein in the *Talḥiṣ* (2011, 139).

5.0. Summary

In this article I have considered the question whether the major 10th-century Karaite grammarian Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn

¹¹ Another description of the same disputation is found in RNL Evr Arab I 3177, fol. 25v.

Nūḥ was identical with Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Baḥṭawayh by analysing a Karaite polemic on the calendar that refers to Ibn Baḥṭawayh. Based on a comparison of views attested in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ‘Aviv* with those expressed in other Karaite works, I have argued that the *Intra-Karaite Polemic on the ‘Aviv* was composed by Sahl ben Maṣṣliaḥ against Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ. Inasmuch as Sahl ben Maṣṣliaḥ mentioned Ibn Baḥṭawayh in the *Polemic* when addressing Ibn Nūḥ and pointed out that the latter was critical of Ibn Baḥṭawayh, I conclude that Ibn Nūḥ could not have been identical with Ibn Baḥṭawayh.

The differentiation between Ibn Nūḥ and Ibn Baḥṭawayh, alongside additional information contained in the *Intra-Karaite Polemic*, allows for the establishment of new bio-bibliographical facts about these grammarians, such as the *terminus ante quem* of Ibn Baḥṭawayh’s death in the 960s and that Ibn Nūḥ’s scholarly interests extended beyond grammar and included the calendar and theology. Furthermore, it calls for modification of our understanding of the history of the Karaite grammatical tradition, by suggesting that Sa‘īd Shirān, who was previously viewed as a member of the circle of Ibn Nūḥ, was instead a student of Ibn Baḥṭawayh and historically preceded Ibn Nūḥ in his grammatical activities. In the sources discussed in the present article, Ibn Nūḥ is said to have studied Sa‘īd Shirān’s book prior to composing his own grammatical Bible commentary, *Al-Diqduq*.

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A LEXICOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF *SHARḤ AL-ʾALFĀẒ* BY ABŪ AL-FARAJ HĀRŪN (*PARASHAT BERESHIT*)*

José Martínez Delgado

Sharḥ al-ʾAlfāẓ aṣ-Ṣaʿba fī al-Miqra, or ‘An Explanation of the Difficult Words in the Bible’, by the Karaite Abū al-Faraj Hārūn is a narrative-selective glossary (Olszowy-Schlanger 2002; Basal 2018a; 2018b; 2020; 2021). In other words, it translates specific words in the biblical text that—at least in the eyes of the author—the average reader might find ambiguous or unintelligible. It uses biblical pericopes as chapters. This preliminary analysis focuses on the literary unit known as *Parashat Bereshit* (146 biblical verses). In most of the copies of *Sharḥ al-ʾAlfāẓ* that were consulted, this section includes a total of 81 words from the book of Genesis (1–6.8).¹

The lexicographical features of Abū al-Faraj Hārūn’s glossary demonstrate that it belongs to a well-defined genre in its

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¹ In all cases where I omit the book title from biblical references, they refer to Genesis.

context, with a very clear function: facilitating reading of the Bible in Hebrew. It may be that its initial purpose was to serve as a glossary for readers who were just beginning to read the Bible or for those who knew it by heart and wished to review it with this glossary at hand, in order to consult words when the occasion arose. Incidentally, it is interesting that the passage on Adam's genealogy in Genesis 5 is entirely omitted.

In the Jewish intellectual context, this work fits into the type described by Meira Polliack and Sason Somek (2000, 16–17) as glossaries of words that are difficult to interpret, which follow the order in which they appear in the Bible and are divided into pericopes or biblical books. The words chosen by the author are translated or glossed using an Arabic equivalent that is not only semantic, but also morphological, offering a literal translation of the word. Finally, when one exists, a parallel case from the Bible is provided by way of example. Additionally, the text shows that the author drew on comparative Semitics in this work, whether he or his readers were aware of the fact.

As Joshua Blau and Simon Hopkins (2000) have argued, it appears that these glossaries served as tools for the early translators of the Bible, based on what they detect as the germ of Arabic biblical translations in these writings: the first glossaries show that the authors did not yet perceive the need to translate verses in their entirety, but limited themselves to words that they either considered difficult to interpret or chose to comment on for some other reason.

Within the Islamic intellectual context, the text is reminiscent of the *kutub al-ġarīb*, or books of rare words that may be

dedicated to cases from the Qurʾān or the *hadiths*, a specific genre that is well-known in medieval Arabic philological literature (Arias 1996, 111–13). These Islamic collections are usually ordered alphabetically and do not take the form of lists (Baalbaki 2014, 62–99). They are, in short, (onomasiological) *mubawwab* or specialised lexicons that comprise a well-known genre that began to develop in the eighth century. They originated in loose notes written by the first Arabic philologists, who already took note of a tripartite division: *ḡarīb al-qurʾān*, *ḡarīb al-ḥadīṭ*, and *varia* (*ḡarīb* or *nādir*). For their compilers, there were two types of words: those that would be understood by any speaker of Arabic (*ʿamma* and *ḥāṣṣa*) and those included in these works, which are only within reach of the most erudite teachers. The first extant monographs date back to the ninth century, and their cases follow the order of the surahs in the Qurʾān for ease of reading. By the tenth century, the first attempts at ordering the lemmas alphabetically had appeared, but they involved only the first radical, before returning to the sequence in the Qurʾān. They would not take the form of dictionaries arranged by roots, whether alphabetical and/or by rhyme, until the eleventh century. The contents of the articles were usually quite focused and concise.

In this context, the genre is not unlike mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic philological literature, especially in the East. Indeed, the basic model for the earliest ninth-century works—those whose cases follow the order of the Qurʾān surahs for easier reading—can be identified, adapted to the Hebrew Bible in the eleventh century, in the *Sharḥ al-ʿAlfāz* by the Karaite Abū al-Faraj Hārūn. The same may be said of the renowned *Kitāb as-Sabʿin Lafẓa* by

Sa'adya Gaon (ed. Allony 1986), where 'neo-Hebrew' words from the Mishna are used to clarify the meaning of some seventy biblical *hapax legomena*. Some sections of the *Risāla* by Yehudah ibn Quraysh may also be under the influence of this genre.

It is in this literary context that a portion of these Judaeo-Arabic works can be understood as or designated *ġarīb al-miqra* when they are dedicated to the study of the Bible. From this perspective, in the following lines I shall attempt to shed some light on the lexicographical technique used by the Karaite Abū al-Faraj Hārūn in his work *Sharḥ al-ʿAlfāẓ aṣ-Ṣaʿba fī al-Miqra* 'An Explanation of the Difficult Words in the Bible', based on copy RNL Evr-Arab. I 1346, the only version that contains the complete *Parashat Bereshit*. The text was copied by and for the personal use of Samuel Halevi ben Abraham ben Moses ben Samuel ben Jacob ben Yeqar ben Moses ben Solomon ben Aharon ben Solomon ben Aharon ben Israel, of the Levite clan known as the Bne Ha-Ṣukhnī (?). The copy is dated 1397.

I have also collated the contents of this copy with the following nine (incomplete) copies, noting only variants that affect the contents and the Arabic, while disregarding the others. The following paragraph describes what each copy covers:

- A: RNL Evr-Arab. I 2603, fol. 1: title—לְמַשֵּׁל (1.18); fol. 2: הַשִּׁיָּאָנִי (3.13)–וַיִּנָּחֶם יי (6.6).
- B: RNL Evr-Arab. I 2685, fol. 1: title—לְאַתָּה (1.14). This copy appears to transmit a longer version of the text. Its additions are included in the notes to the edition and translation.
- C: RNL Evr-Arab. I 1231.10, fol. 1: title—הַרְמִשָּׁת (1.21).

- C1: RNL Evr-Arab. I 1231.10, fol. 1: רָקִיעַ (1.6)–חֲדָקָל (2.14) + fol. 2: עֶזְרָא (2.18)–תְּשׁוּקַתְּךָ (3.16).
- C2: RNL Evr-Arab. I 1231.38, fol. 1: לְפָצְעִי (4.23)–וַיִּנָּחֵם (6.6).
- D: RNL Evr-Arab. I 2876, fol. 1: רָקִיעַ (1.6)–תִּרְדָּמָה (2.21).
- E: RNL Evr-Arab. I 4597, fol. 1: [הֶרְמֶשֶׁת] (1.21)–עֶצְבוֹנֶךָ (3.16).
- F: RNL Evr-Arab. I 2877, fol. 2: וְדָבָק (2.24)–בְּזַעַת (3.19).
- G: RNL Evr-Arab. I 2649, fol. 1: תִּאֲזָה (3.6)–חֶרֶשׁ (4.22). This version is a faithful copy of the text that I have used as the basis for my edition.

From a lexicographical point of view, all the words glossed throughout the entire work lend themselves to the basic, rudimentary analysis characteristic of glossaries, using the following formula:

glossed word + Arabic equivalent + link + parallel Hebrew case, e.g.,

בָּרָא כֹל מִן וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים

בָּרָא (1.1) 'He created' from וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (1.21)

When a word lends itself to several interpretations, this formula is repeated as many times as necessary, introduced by *wa-qila* (see vv. 1.2; 3.19; 4.7; and 4.22). In other situations, this is not sufficient, and supplemental grammatical or exegetical information is added to the basic formula:²

² All the supplemental information in this section is grammatical in nature, except for one exegetical comment in 4.7, transmitted only in copy B and included in the notes to the translation.

glossed word + Arabic equivalent + parallel Hebrew case + link + complementary information

אֵיכָה אֵין אַנְת מִן אֵיה אַחִימַעֵץ וַי וְאֶלכֶּאף צִמִּיר אֶלמִכֶּאטֵב בַּמִּתְאֲבָה אֶתָּה
 אֵיה אַחִימַעֵץ וַיְהוֹנָתָן (2 Sam. 3.9) 'where are you' from אֵיכָה: (3.9). *Kaf* is the pronoun of the second-person masculine singular, equivalent to אַתָּה.

The entries adhere strictly to the order of the Scripture, with the assumption that everything omitted is already known. The Hebrew form in question is always accompanied by an Arabic equivalent and not a definition. Then, by means of a link, the preposition מִן *min* 'from', another parallel Hebrew case is presented that confirms the proposed meaning or interpretation, applying the law of synonymy by substitution, and giving meaning to both passages. The process is simple, consisting of replacing the Hebrew word with its Arabic equivalent in the two verses. In the first example: בָּרָא (1.1) 'He created' from וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (1.21), בָּרָא means *khalaqa* 'He created' and the meaning of בָּרָא must be replaced by the Hebrew from the parallel וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (1.21). As the grammatical information from each form is in its equivalent, this is not a definition, and the result is: *wa-khalaqa allāh* 'and God created'.

From a lexicographical perspective, this basic sequence gives the glossary a primitive quality that distinguishes it from dictionaries (Eldar 2001). Rather, perhaps, it is the vestige of a rudimentary technique that contains the seed of the great lexicons. In fact, this glossary is more similar to medieval dictionaries than to the cumulative Masora lists (Dotan 2005).

The author's aim is to clarify and update the outdated and obscure concepts in the Hebrew Bible by finding equivalents in Arabic, the language used in daily life. The fact that he uses the nexus מן between the definition and the parallel case that confirms it also confers to the glossary a somewhat basic air. In other words, the glossary reproduces a technique that had already become established and had fixed the form of dictionaries: grouping forms derived from the same root around the same meaning. An examination of the oldest compendia shows that this link, מן, was already used to join the definition to the case in the *ʿEgron* 'The-saurus' compiled by Sāʿadya Ga'on in the early tenth century. For example, two meanings are identified under the lemma אב (Al-lony 1969, 164):

אב יולד מן אביו ואמו

אב חודש

אב: 'father' from אביו ואמו 'thy father and thy mother' (Prov. 23.25)

אב: 'month'

In the *ʿEgron*, which was created to help poets find rhymes, an entry, in this case אב, is presented, with one or several meanings ascribed to it, in Hebrew in these cases. The first is 'father' (יולד) joined by means of the linking particle מן, to an example from Scripture that confirms the value of the proposed definition: אביו ואמו 'thy father and thy mother' (Prov. 23.25). The second meaning, 'month' (חודש), is not accompanied by an example. This work, which was written in the East in the early tenth century, is not a dictionary, but rather a proto-lexicographical glossary,

providing a single case instead of developing the groupings of citations.

In the case of the Karaite Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, the Hebrew Bible and its sections in Aramaic can and must be interpreted on the basis of the Bible itself, without recourse to external texts, something confirmed by the use of the preposition מן ‘from’ with every entry.³ In fact, when a glossed word does not have a parallel in the corpus comprising the 24 books of the Bible, in other words when the author believes it to be a *hapax legomenon*, he does not turn to external Hebrew sources like the Mishna, the Talmud, or the other rabbinic texts generally considered authoritative in the history of Hebrew lexicography. Rather, he deduces the interpretation according to the context of the form and the passage (*min al-maʿnā*). In fact, of the 82 Arabic equivalents provided in this section, 20 parallel cases come from the book of Genesis itself, 22 from the other four books of the Torah, 16 of the Prophets, and 22 from the Writings, while only two must be deduced from their context, since they lack a parallel in the Bible.

In the base text, of the 81 glossed words, 73 are presented as simple lexical units or independent words, while eight are complex lexical units that may be syntagmas or clauses. The other copies usually contain only the simple lexical units. The entry תָּהוּ וְנָבְהוּ (1.2) clearly deals with a complex lexical unit, and it is also presented as such in the parallel case from Jer. 4.23. Clear examples of nominal syntagmas include וְקוֹץ וְדִרְדֵּר (3.18) which, as above, is presented with the parallel case from Hos.

³ In other sections of the work, the word *mitl*, ‘identical to’, is also used.

10.8; and the special case of תולדות השמים (2.4), where the parallel case, מה-ילד יום (Prov. 27.1), shows that in this situation, the author is more concerned about the semantics of the word than its form. The remaining cases are verb clauses: יקוו המים (1.9), with its parallel מקוה המים (cf. 1.10); and ישרצו המים (1.20), whose verb must be understood from השרץ השרץ (7.21). Syntax is very much present, such that when ולא תגועו (3.3) is compared to לא-יד (Exod. 19.13), it confirms that this verb governs the preposition -ב; and the same can be said of ויחר לקין (4.5) and its parallel ויחר למשה מאד (Num. 16.15), which confirms that the verb governs -ל; and similarly, with וינחם יי (6.6), whose parallel וינחם יי על-הרעה (Exod. 32.14) demonstrates that the verb governs the preposition על.

The Arabic equivalents are words that translate the glossed word, as recorded in the Bible and reflecting its form and complements, such as prefixed conjunctions, prepositions, and determiners.

Eight times the word used in Arabic is a cognate of the Hebrew, and comparative Semitics is used in the following cases: ויפח (1.2), equivalent to the Arabic *tih wa-bih* 'wasteland'; גיחון (2.7), equivalent to the Arabic *wa-nafakha* 'and He blew'; ויישן (2.13) is known in Arabic as *jihān* 'Ceyhan'; וינחם (2.21), equivalent to the Arabic *wa-wasina* 'and he slept deeply'; וינחם (3.19) can be interpreted in Arabic as *bi-za'za'* 'with indignation'; וינחם (3.19), equivalent in Arabic to *anfuka* 'your nose'; וינחם (4.11) is *faddat* in Arabic 'has poured out'; וינחם (4.12) is equivalent to the Arabic participle *wa-mutanawwid* 'and shaken'. It is not com-

pletely clear whether, when he compares מְרוֹחֶפֶת (1.2) to *muraḥ-rifah* ‘fluttering’, he is employing a comparative approach and, notably, the author himself is forced to gloss the Arabic word with *bi-ma‘nā mutaḥarrikah* ‘with the meaning of moving, shaking’.

The use of these equivalents makes it possible to recognise words that are synonymous in Hebrew, such as בָּרָא (1.1) and וַיֵּצֶר (2.7), both glossed as *wa-khalaqa* ‘and He created’, later adopted by another Karaite sage, Abū Sulaymān, in his commentary on Genesis: וקולה ברא יפסר כלק במעני יצר (Skoss 1928, 272, ln. 10).⁴

The comparison of לִטֵּשׁ (4.22) with שִׁלַּט confirms that the author also uses the permutation of consonants as another lexicographical approach.

Finally, it is possible to discern that -לִ followed by a noun, in לִפְצֹעֵי and לְחִבְרֹתַי (4.23), is translated as *‘inda* ‘for, because of’, while when followed by an infinitive, as in לְהַשְׁפִּיל (3.6), מן is preferred with clear purposive value. Other copies prefer to maintain -לִ in their translation.

The consonantal text of the Bible transmitted by the copyist and owner of the copy is quite stable. The common alternation of *sin* and *samekh* is found only in שָׁבָא < סָבָא (10.7) and in וְשִׁבְתָּ < וְסִבְתָּ (10.7), and the other way round in מִשְׁתַּפֵּל < מִסְתַּכֵּל (Dan. 7.8), although the *sin* is maintained in בִּשְׁעָרָה < בִּשְׁעָרָה (Job 9.17).

⁴ I would like to thank Dr Nadia Vidro for calling this case to my attention.

The base copy is partially vocalised with Hebrew and Arabic vowels. At times, in the case of Hebrew vocalisation, it is possible to detect forms that are clearly mistaken, for example the use of mobile *shewa* instead of *qameṣ* in רָקִיעַ < רְקִיעַ (1.6), and instead of *ṣere* in וּמַחְלָבֶהוּ < וּמַחְלָבֶהוּ (4.4);⁵ a *pataḥ* instead of *qameṣ* in בְּשִׁגָּם < בְּשִׁגָּם (6.3); *qameṣ* instead of *shewa* in כְּתָנָה (plural?) < כְּתָנָה (37.3) and instead of *pataḥ* in וַיִּבְדֵּל < וַיִּבְדֵּל (1.4); and the determination of the words that are indeterminate, like בְּשַׁעְרָה < בְּשַׁעְרָה (Job 9.17).

Other cases seem to reflect the pronunciation characteristic of the copyist's era and context.

The use of mobile *shewa* instead of *ḥaṭef pataḥ* shows that *shewa* sounded like *pataḥ* in these cases: הָיִית < הָיִית (Dan. 7.8); חֲגֹרֶת < חֲגֹרֶת (3.7); וּלְנַחֲמוֹ < וּלְנַחֲמוֹ (Job 2.11); and עֲנֶק < עֲנֶק (Num. 13.33).

Following this same tendency toward the /a/ sound, *ḥaṭef pataḥ* can systematically appear instead of *ḥaṭef segol* in אֱלֹהִים < אֱלֹהִים (1.21) and אֱלֹהִים (5.1); however, with the suffixed pronoun, *segol* is used instead of *ḥaṭef segol*: אֱלֹהֵי < אֱלֹהֵי (Ps. 109.26). In this context, *ḥaṭef pataḥ* replaces mobile *shewa* in יִשְׂרָאֵל < יִשְׂרָאֵל (1.20), although in one fragment from the Cairo Geniza (T-S A41.34) יִשְׂרָאֵל is found with *pataḥ*.⁶

Fairly often, *pataḥ* is used instead of a stressed *segol*: מִרְחֶפֶת < מִרְחֶפֶת (1.2 and including a *segol* for *pataḥ* on the *resh*); אֵיכָה < אֵיכָה (3.9); אֶפְיֹ < אֶפְיֹ (3.19); and the same occurs with

⁵ For the *pataḥ* > *segol* interchange, see below.

⁶ I would like to thank my colleague Dr Estara Arrant, who confirmed the existence of this variant.

the segolates $\text{בְּצִלָּם} < \text{בַּצִּלָּם}$ (Ps. 39.7), $\text{נָזַם} < \text{נִזֵּם}$ (Ezek. 16.12), and $\text{פָּצַע} < \text{פִּצְעַע}$ (Exod. 21.25).

Something similar occurs with verbs whose first radical is *yod*, which, in addition to vocalising the two *yods* with *hireq*, use *pataḥ* instead of *segol*: $\text{וַיִּצֹר} < \text{וַיִּצְרֹ}$ (2.7). However, this change from *segol* to *pataḥ* does not take place in the relevant pausal form, $\text{וַיִּשָּׁן} < \text{וַיִּשְׁן}$ (41.5). The same occurs with $\text{חִדְקֵל} < \text{חִדְקֶל}$ (2.14), while $\text{חִדְקֶל} < \text{חִדְקֵל}$ (Dan. 10.4) is preferred in pause.

In any event, the use of *pataḥ* instead of unstressed *segol* is quite common: $\text{עֹזַר} < \text{עֹזֵר}$ (2.18); $\text{וַאֲתָן} < \text{וַאֲתֵן}$ (Ezek. 16.12); $\text{וַיַּחֲלֵל} < \text{וַיַּחֲלֵל}$ (9.20); $\text{וַיַּחֲלֵל} < \text{וַיַּחֲלֵל}$ (4.4); $\text{וַיַּחֲלֵל} < \text{וַיַּחֲלֵל}$ (3.6); $\text{וַיַּחֲלֵל} < \text{וַיַּחֲלֵל}$ (6.5); and, twice, $\text{וַיַּחֲלֵל} < \text{וַיַּחֲלֵל}$ (6.6) and וַיַּחֲלֵל (Exod. 32.14).

Conversely, *segol* appears instead of stressed *pataḥ*: $\text{תִּרְדָּמָה} < \text{תִּרְדָּמָה}$ (1 Sam. 26.12). This is systematic with the plural and dual endings, as in $\text{הַמִּים} < \text{הַמֵּים}$ (1.9) and $\text{הַמִּים} < \text{הַמֵּים}$ (1.20), and with *dagesh* in $\text{הַמִּים} < \text{הַמֵּים}$ (1.10); $\text{הַשָּׁמַיִם} < \text{הַשָּׁמַיִם}$ (2.4); and $\text{שְׁבַעֲתַיִם} < \text{שְׁבַעֲתַיִם}$ (4.15), although, again, this change does not occur in the pausal form: $\text{שְׁבַעֲתַיִם} < \text{שְׁבַעֲתַיִם}$ (Prov. 6.31).

The use of *segol* instead of *pataḥ*, whether stressed or unstressed, occurs systematically in /a/ type segolate nouns with a guttural second radical: $\text{לָהֵט} < \text{לָהֵט}$ (3.4); and $\text{תָּחַת} < \text{תָּחַת}$ (Exod. 21.25), and without *dagesh* or *rafe* in $\text{תָּחַת} < \text{תָּחַת}$ (Exod. 21.25). At times, the change affects only the unstressed syllable, as in $\text{הַפָּעֵם} < \text{הַפָּעֵם}$ (30.20) and $\text{בִּיזָע} < \text{בִּיזָע}$ (Ezek. 44.18).

The same occurs with the particles אָדָּ < אָדָּ (Ps. 39.7), אָלָּ < אָלָּ (Exod. 5.9) and מָה < מָה (Prov. 27.1), which are unstressed in all cases, and the same phenomenon is seen in the narrative imperfects וַיִּשָּׁע < וַיִּשָּׁע (4.4) and וַיִּחַר < וַיִּחַר (4.5).

Finally, *šere* appears instead of stressed *pataḥ* in מִשְׁתַּכֵּל < מִשְׁתַּכֵּל (Dan. 7.8) and even instead of stressed *segol* and in pause, as in יִרְחֹף < יִרְחֹף (Deut. 32.11).

The owner felt the need to identify the books where the parallels appear and so added their titles in the margins in a smaller hand. The five books of the Torah and the twelve Minor Prophets are handled as literary units, unlike the others, which are identified by their corresponding titles. There are very few mistakes: מָה־יִלָּד (Prov. 27.1) is identified as Job and כִּי־יִדְעָתִי (Deut. 31.21) as Psalms. Moreover, הוּא־חֲדָקָל (Dan. 10.4) is placed in the Pentateuch, although this is due to an error of textual transmission of this glossary, and something similar occurs with וַעֲלִי־תְשׁוּקָתוֹ (Song 7.11) and יִשְׁלַם־שְׂבָעֵתִים (Prov. 6.31), both placed in the Pentateuch, with וַאֲלִי־תְשׁוּקָתוֹ (4.7) and כִּי־שְׂבָעֵתִים־יָקָם־קִיּוֹן (4.24) in mind.

1.0. Translation

In the name of the Lord, God of the Universe

An explanation of the words that include a difficulty in the Bible, with commentary on their etymologies, by the teacher Abūlfaraj Harūn, may God have mercy upon him

Genesis⁷

בָּרָא (1.1) 'created' from יִבְרָא אֱלֹהִים (1.21).

וַתְּהִי וָבֶהוּ (1.2) 'wasteland'. 'Blighted ruin' has been said. 'Deserted hollow' has been said, from וַתְּהִי-וָבֶהוּ (Jer. 4.23).

תְּהוֹם רָבָה (7.11) 'the abyss'⁸ from תְּהוֹם רָבָה (7.11).

מְרַחֶפֶת 'fluttering' with the meaning of 'moving' from יִרְחֹף (Deut. 32.11).⁹

וַיַּבְדֵּל (1.4) 'and He separated' from בֵּין הַיּוֹם (1.4).

רִקְיעַ (1.6) 'tapestry' from תְּרִיקֶעַ עָמֹד לְשִׁחָקִים (Job 37.18).

מִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם (1.9) 'gathering together of the waters' from יָקוּוּ הַמַּיִם (cf. 1.10).¹⁰

מְצֻא רִשָּׁא (1.11) 'rich with pastures' from מְצֻא רִשָּׁא (Job 38.27).

אַת־הָאֲרֵבָה לְמִינוֹ (Lev. 11.22) 'after his kind' from לְמִינוֹ.

מְאֹרָה (1.14) 'brilliant' from שָׁמֶן לְמֶאֱרָה (Exod. 25.6).

לְאֵתָהּ (Josh. 2.12) 'as evidence' from אֵת אֵתָהּ (Josh. 2.12).

וְלְמוֹעֲדֵי (2 Sam. 20.5) 'to the time' from יָעֵדוּ אֲשֶׁר יָעֵדוּ (2 Sam. 20.5).

וְלִמְשָׁל (4.7) 'and to rule over' from וְלִמְשָׁל (4.7).

יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם (1.20) 'let the water teem' from יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם (7.21).¹¹

הִרְמָשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ (1.26) 'crawling' from הִרְמָשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ (1.21).

כַּנָּף (7.14) 'wing' from צִפּוֹר כָּל-כַּנָּף (7.14).

בְּצִלְמֵנוּ (Ps. 39.7) 'in our form' from אֵד-בְּצִלְמֵנוּ (Ps. 39.7).

בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ (5.1) 'in our likeness' from בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים (5.1).

⁷ Copy B prefers: *Parasha Bereshit* and adds בְּרֵאשִׁית 'beginning' from רֵאשִׁית בְּבוּרֵי אֲדָמָתָךְ (Exod. 23.19).

⁸ In the original גַּמַּר and see Blau (2006, 484).

⁹ Cf. Skoss (1945, 604–5).

¹⁰ Other copies prefer מִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם וּבֹרֵךְ מִקְוֵה-הַמַּיִם (Lev. 11.36).

¹¹ Other copies prefer בְּשָׂרָא הַשָּׂרָא עַל-הָאָרֶץ (Lev. 11.29).

- וְיִרְדּוּ 'and let them rule over' from בִּפְרֹד (Lev. 25.43).
- וַיִּכְבְּשׁוּם לַעֲבָדִים 'and they subjected' from וְכִבְּשָׁה (Jer. 34.11).¹²
- מֵה־יֵלֵד יוֹם 'the events of heaven' from תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם (Prov. 27.1).
- אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים 'tree' from שִׁיחַ (21.15).
- מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר | לִבְהֶמָּה 'to sprout' from יִצְמַח (Ps. 104.14).
- וְאֵד 'and a mist' from יִזְקוּ מִטָּר לְאֵדוֹ (Job 36.27).
- וַיִּצְרָה 'and He created' from לִשְׁבֹּת יִצְרָה (Isa. 45.18).
- וַיִּפֶּחַ 'and He blew' from וַיִּפְּחֵתִי בּוֹ יָעַן (Hag. 1.9).
- פִּישׁוֹן (2.11) 'the Nile' from its context.
- סְבָא וְחוּיִלָּה וְסַבְתָּה 'Zawila' from הַחוּיִלָּה (10.7).
- וְעֵינָיו כְּעֵין הַבְּדֹלֶחַ 'the crystal' from הַבְּדֹלֶחַ (2.12).
- גֵּיחוֹן (2.13) 'Ceyhan' from the context.
- הוּא חֲדָקָל 'Tigris' from חֲדָקָל (2.14).
- עֲזָרָנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי 'help' from עֲזָר (Ps. 109.26).
- תִּרְדָּמָה יִי נִפְלָה 'slumber' from תִּרְדָּמָה (1 Sam. 26.12).
- וַיִּישָׁן וַיַּחֲלֹם שְׁנִית 'and he slept deeply' from וַיִּישָׁן (41.5).
- וַיִּסְגֹּר 'and shut' from וַיִּסְגֹּר יִי בַעֲדוֹ (7.16).
- הַפֶּעַם יִזְבְּלָנִי אִישִׁי 'this time' from הַפֶּעַם (2.23).
- וְלֹא־יִדְבֹּק בִּידָךְ 'he will join' from וְדָבַק (2.24).
- וַיִּתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ 'they became embarrassed and they blushed' from גַּם־בּוֹשׁ לֹא־יִבּוֹשׁוּ (Jer. 6.15). The *tav* is from the *hitpa*“*el* and the second *shin* is due to enjambement.
- תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים 'tree' from שִׁיחַ (2.5).
- וַיַּעֲשֵׂוּ גַם־הֶמָּה בְּעַרְמָה 'maliciously' from עָרוֹם (Josh. 9.4).

¹² Other copies prefer וַיִּכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לַפְּנִיכָם (Num. 32.29).

לֹא־תִגַּע בּוֹ יָדְךָ (3.3) ‘you will not even go close’ from
(Exod. 19.13).

וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־ (21.19). ‘opened’ from (3.5) וַיִּפְקַחוּ.

תִּאְוָה (3.6) ‘wish’ from וַיִּתְאוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ (Ps. 45.12).¹³

וְנִחְמָד (Exod. 20.14). ‘and desirable’ from לֹא תִחְמָד:

וְנִחְמָד (Dan. 7.8). ‘upon seeing’ from מִשְׁתַּבֵּל הָיִיתָ

וַיִּתְּפֹר עַת (3.7) ‘and they restricted themselves’ from וַיִּתְּפְרוּ
(Eccl. 3.7).

חֲגֹרֶת ‘short garment’ from וַיִּחְגֹּר נִתְּנָה לְכַנְעֲנִי (Prov. 31.24).

אֵינָה (2 Sam. 17.20). ‘where are you’ from וַיְהוֹנָתָן וְאֵינָה

Kaf is the pronoun of the second-person masculine singular,
equivalent to אַתָּה.

וְאִירָא (Deut. 3.22). ‘and I was afraid’ from כִּי יִי וְאִירָא

וְאִירָא (Ps. 89.23). ‘led me astray’ from לֹא־יִשָּׂא אוֹיֵב בּוֹ הַשִּׁיָּאֲנִי

גִּחְוֹנָךְ (Lev. 11.42). ‘your chest’ from עַל־גִּחְוֹנִי

וְאִיבָה (Exod. 23.22). ‘and enmity’ from אֶת־אִיבֶיךָ

וְאִיבָה (Job 9.17). ‘he will crush you’ from יִשׁוּפְנִי

וּמַעֲצָבוֹן יָדֵינוּ (5.29). ‘your hardship’ from עֲצָבוֹנְךָ

וְעָלִי תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ (Song 7.11). ‘your obedience’ from תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ

וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדָּר יַעֲלֶה (Hos. 10.8). ‘and thorns and thistles’ from וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדָּר

לֹא יִחְגְּרוּ בִּיזַע (Ezek. 44.18) ‘with the sweat of’ has been said from
(Ezek. 44.18) and ‘with indignation’ has been said of the
passage mentioned, from וְלֹא־זַע מִמֶּנּוּ (Est. 5.9).

וְאַתָּן נֶזֶם עַל־אַפְּךָ (Ezek. 16.12). ‘your nose’ from אַפְּךָ

כְּתָנֹת (37.3). ‘tunics’ from כְּתָנֹת פָּסִים (3.21)

¹³ Other copies prefer וַיִּתְּאוּ דָּוִיד וְיִאמֶר (1 Chron. 11:17).

כְּרִבִּים מִעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם (Exod. 3.24) ‘the statues’ (Exod. 26.1).

בְּלֹהֲטֵיהֶם (Exod. 7.11) ‘brilliance’ from לָהֵט.

כָּל חֵלֶב יִצְהָר (Num. 18.12) ‘and the finest of’ from וּמִחֻלְבָּהוּ (4.4).

וְאַל-יָשָׁעוּ בְּדַבְרֵי-שֹׁקֵר (Exod. 5.9) ‘and turned back to’ from וַיָּשָׁע.

וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד (4.5) ‘and Cain found it difficult’ from וַיִּחַר לְקִיִּן (Num. 16.15).¹⁴

שִׁאֵת פְּנִי-רָשָׁע (Prov. 18.5) and ‘forgiveness’ has been said from מִנְשֹׂא (4.13).¹⁵

יִפְצֶה-פִּיהוּ (Job 35.16) ‘has poured out’ from פָּצַתָּהּ (4.11).

וַיִּנָּעוּ אֲמוֹת הַסָּפִים (Isa. 6.4) ‘shaken’ from נָע (4.12).

לְנוֹד-לּוֹ וּלְנַחֲמוֹ (Job 2.11) ‘and shaken’ from נָוָד.

יִשְׁלַם שְׁבַעֲתָיִם (Prov. 6.31) ‘completely’ from שָׁבַעֲתִים (4.15).

חֲרָבוֹ יִלְטֹשׁ (Ps. 7.13) and ‘authority, teacher’ has been said, equivalent to לִטֵּשׁ (4.22).

וַחֲרָשׁ לֹא יִמָּצֵא (1 Sam. 13.19) ‘smith’ from חָרַשׁ.

פָּצַע תַּחַת פָּצַע (Exod. 21.25) ‘for my fracture’ from לְפָצְעִי (4.23).

חֲבוּרָה תַּחַת חֲבוּרָה (Exod. 21.25) ‘for my wound’ from לְחַבְרָתִי.

לֹא יִלָּם כִּי כִסְפוֹ הוּא (Exod. 21.21) ‘be avenged’ from יָקָם (4.24).

¹⁴ Copy B prefers וַיִּחַר לְשִׁמוּאֵל (1 Sam. 15.11).

¹⁵ Copy B prefers:

שִׁאֵת (4.7) ‘elevation’ from פְּנִי-רָשָׁע (Prov. 18.5); ‘pardon’ has been said; ‘acceptance’ has been said, from לֹא תִשָּׂא שְׂמֶעַ שְׂוִיא (Exod. 23.1), in other words, if you had offered, O Cain, something better in its place, it would have been accepted from you, but since you did not do so, your offering is tossed, thrown at the door with the offerings, and you will not be able to say ‘I had no other option but to (?)’.

שָׁת (Isa. 22.7) 'posted' from שָׁתוּ הַשְּׁעָרָה (4.25).
 וַיַּחֲלֵ נָח אִישׁ הָאָדָמָה (9.20) 'began' from הוֹחֵל (4.26).
 יָדִין עִמָּךְ בְּצֶדֶק (Ps. 72.2) 'be brought to justice' from יָדוֹן (6.3).
 שָׁגַם-יָהּ 'also' because *shin* is equivalent to אָשַׁר, identical to שָׁגַם-יָהּ (Eccl. 2.15) and *bet* has been prefixed to *shin*.
 בְּנֵי עֵנָק מִן-הַנִּפְלִיִּים (Num. 13.33) 'the barbarians' from הַנִּפְלִיִּים (6.4).
 כִּי יִדְעָתִי אֶת-יִצְרוֹ (Deut. 31.21) 'idea' from יִצָּר (6.5).
 וַיִּנָּחֶם יְיָ עַל-הָרָעָה (Exod. 32.14) 'and God relented' from וַיִּנָּחֶם יְיָ (6.6).

2.0. Edition

בשם יי אל עולם¹⁶
 שרח אלאפאט אלתי פיהא צעובה פי אלמקרא
 ודכר¹⁷ אשתקאקהא ללשיך¹⁸ אבי¹⁹ אלפרג הרון²⁰
 רחמה²¹ אללה²²
 בראשית²³
 תו ברא כלק מן ויברא אלהים²⁴

¹⁶ A + יִתְּשׁ.

¹⁷ A – פי אלמקרא ודכר.

¹⁸ A + אלפאצל אלסטאז.

¹⁹ A אבו.

²⁰ הדיין C: הרון.

²¹ C רח.

²² B – ודכר אשתקאקהא ללשיך אבי אלפרג הרון רחמה אללה.

²³ B. בראשית אול מן ראשית בכורי אדם + B. פראשה בראשית B.

²⁴ יוצר אור ובורא חשך B: ויברא אלהים.

תהו וְבָהוּ	תיה וביה	וקיל כראב יבאב ²⁵ וקיל
ירמיה	קאע צפצאף	מז וְהָנָה תָהוּ וְבָהוּ
תו	גמר	מז תָהוּס רָבָה
	מרפרפה	במעני מתחרכה ²⁶
תו		מז עֶל־גִּזְלִיו יִרְחֹף
תו	ופצל	מז לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וְהַיּוֹם ²⁷
	בסאט	מז תִּרְקִיעַ עִמּוֹ לְשָׁח ²⁸
תו	יקוו הַמָּיִם ²⁹	תגתמע אלמיאה ³⁰ מן מְקוֹה הַמָּיִם ³¹
איוב	תִּדְשָׂא	מז מוֹצָא דְשָׂא ³²
תו	לְמִינוּ	מז אֶת הָאֲרֶבֶה לְמִינוּ
תו	מְאֻרֹת	מז שְׁמֵן לְמֵאזֹר ³³ [א2]
	לְאוֹתוֹת	מז אוֹת אֲמַת ³⁴
	ולמועדִים	מז הַמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר יַעֲדוּ ³⁵
	ולמשול	מז וְאִתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ
		יהושע
		שמואל
		תו

²⁵ C – יבאב.

²⁶ C – במעני מתחרכה.

²⁷ A – וְהַיּוֹם.

²⁸ AC1 לשחקים. D. לשחקים.

²⁹ C1 – הַמָּיִם.

³⁰ BC1 – אלמיאה.

³¹ אֶת מְעֵן וְבוֹר מְקוֹה מִים D; אֶת מְעֵן וְבוֹר מְקוֹה C1; מְעֵן וְבוֹר מְקוֹה B; מְקוֹה הַמָּיִם.

³² C1 + וְלִהְיוֹתָ. D. וְלִהְיוֹתָ.

³³ B + בְּשֵׁם. C1.

³⁴ וְנִתְּתָם לִי + D. וְנִתְּתָם לִי + C. וְנִתְּתָם לִי + BC1.

³⁵ C1 + וְיִחָר מִן. D. וְיִחָר מִן.

³⁶ C1D – אֲשֶׁר יַעֲדוּ.

תו	תסעי ³⁷ אלמיאה	מן השרץ השרץ ³⁸	ישרצו המים
תו	אלדאבה	מן הרומש על ³⁹ הא ⁴⁰	הרומשת
תו	גנאח	מן ⁴¹ צפור כל כנף	כנף
תלין	בקאלבנא	מן אד בצלם ⁴²	בצלמנו
תו	כשבהנא	מן בדמות אלהים ⁴³	בדמותינו
תו	ויסתולו	מן לא תרדה בו בפרך	וירדו
ירמיה	ואמלכוהא	מן ויכבשום לעבדים ⁴⁴	וכבשוה
איזב	חואדת אלסמא ⁴⁵	מן ⁴⁷ מה ילד יום	תולדות השמים
תו	שגר	מן ⁴⁸ אחד השיחים ⁴⁹	שיח
תלין	ינבת	מן מצמיח חציר ל ⁵⁰	יצמח
איזב	ובכאר	מן יזקו מטר לאידו	ואד
ישעיה	וכלק	מן לשבת יצרה ⁵¹	וייצר

³⁷ D תסעא.

³⁸ ישרצו תסעא מן בשרץ השרץ על C1: ישרצו המים תסעי אלמיאה מן השרץ השרץ.
בשרץ השרץ D: בשרץ השרץ.

³⁹ C – על.

⁴⁰ הרומש הרומש על הא C1: הרומש על הא. הארץ E; הא[רץ] C: הא.

⁴¹ כל + D. כל + C1.

⁴² יתהלך איש + E. יתהלך איש + D. יתהלך C1.

⁴³ D + עשה אותו.

⁴⁴ ויכבשוה הארץ לפניכם D; ונכשה[!] הארץ לפניכם C1: ויכבשום לעבדים.

⁴⁵ C1D – השמים.

⁴⁶ C1D – אלסמא.

⁴⁷ C1 + כי לא תדע. D.

⁴⁸ C1 + תחת. D.

⁴⁹ E – שיח שגר מן אחד השיחים.

⁵⁰ C1E לבהמה. D.

⁵¹ C1 + אני יי.

וִּפְחַ	וּנְפַחַ	מִן וּנְפַחְתִּי בֹו יַעֲן ⁵²	תרי עש
פִּישׁוֹן	אֲלָנִיל	מִן אֲלִמְגָאוּרָה [בב]	
תוֹ הַחֲוִילָה	זוֹיִלָה ⁵³	מִן שָׁבָא וַחֲוִילָה וְשִׁבְתָּ ⁵⁴	
תוֹ הַבְּדוּלָח	אֲלִבְלוֹר	מִן וְעִינוֹ כְּעֵין הַבְּדוּלָח	
גִּיחוֹן	גִּיחָאן	מִן אֲלִמְעַנִּי ⁵⁵	
תוֹ חֲדָקָל	דְּגִלָה ⁵⁶	מִן הוּא חֲדָקָל וְהִנְהָר ⁵⁷	
תלין עֶזֶר	עוֹן	מִן עֶזְרָנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי ⁵⁸	
שמואל תַּרְדֵּמָה	סבאת	מִן תַּרְדֵּמַת יְיָ נִפְלָה ⁵⁹	
תוֹ וַיִּישָׁן	וּוסן	מִן וַיִּישָׁן וַיַּחְלוֹם שְׁנִית	
תוֹ וַיִּסְגֹּר	וסד	מִן וַיִּסְגֹּר יְיָ בְּעֶדֶי	
תוֹ הַפַּעֵם	אֲלִדְפָעָה	מִן הַפַּעֵם יִזְבְּלֵנִי אִישִׁי ⁶¹	
תוֹ וַדְּבַק	וילתצק ⁶²	מִן וְלֹא יִדְבַק בִּידֶךָ	
ירמיה יִתְבוֹשְׁשׁוּ	יכזו ויסתחו ⁶³	מִן גַּם בּוֹשׁ לֹא יִבוֹשׁוּ	
	ואלתו ⁶⁴	לִלְאִפְתָּעָאֵל וְאִלְשִׁין	

⁵² ונפחתי בו ונפחתי בו יען. E; רְקוּעִי פָחִים D; וּנְפַחְתִּי בֹו יַעֲן. מה. + C1

⁵³ אלוזילה C1D.

⁵⁴ שבא וחווילה E; סָבָא וַחֲוִילָה D; סבא וחווילה וסבאת C1; שָׁבָא וַחֲוִילָה וְשִׁבְתָּ.

⁵⁵ C1D + והו מערוף.

⁵⁶ אלדגלה C1D.

⁵⁷ הוא E; הַנְּהָר הַגָּדוֹל הוּא חֲדָקָל D; הנהר הגדול הוא חדקל C1; הוּא חֲדָקָל וְהִנְהָר חדקל.

⁵⁸ עזרני יי E; עֶדֶד הַנָּה עֶזְרָנִי יי D; עַד הנה עֶזְרָנִי יי א C1; עֶזְרָנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי.

⁵⁹ C1E + כי.

⁶⁰ E – נִפְלָה.

⁶¹ E – אִישִׁי.

⁶² C1 וילתזם.

⁶³ C1 יסתחו – F. יסתחו.

⁶⁴ C1E + פיה. F. פיהא.

אלתאני ⁶⁵	מִן אֶלְתֵּרֶאדָּף ⁶⁶		
תו	שִׁיחַ	שָׁגַר	מִן תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים ⁶⁷
יהושע	עָרוֹם	כְּבִית	מִן וַיַּעֲשׂוּ גַם הֵמָּה בְּעֶרְמָה
תו	וְלֹא תִגְעוּ	וְלֹא ⁶⁸ תִּדְּנוּ	מִן לֹא תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד כִּי ⁶⁹
תו	וְנִפְקָחוּ	וּתְנַפְּתַח	מִן וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶ ⁷⁰ [א3]
	תֵּאָוָה	שֶׁהוּא	מִן וַיִּתְּאוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ ⁷¹
	וְנִחְמָד	וּמִתְמַנָּא	מִן לֹא תִחְמֹד:
	לְהִשְׁכִּיל	מִן אֶלְתֵּפֶרס ⁷²	מִן מִסְתַּכֵּל הוּיָת ⁷³
	וַיִּתְּפְרוּ	וּכְאֵטוּ	מִן עֵת לְתִפּוֹר עֵת ⁷⁴
	חֲגוּרוֹת	וּזְרָאֵת	מִן וַחֲגוּר נִתְּנָה לְכַנְעָנִי ⁷⁵
	אִיכָּה	אִין אַנְתָּ	מִן אִיָּה אַחִימַעֲזָן ⁷⁶
	וּאֶלְכֵאֶף ⁷⁷ צִמִּיר אֶלְמַכְאֵטִב ⁷⁸ בְּמִתְאַבֵּה ⁷⁹ אֶתָּה		

⁶⁵ C1 F. אלתאני – אלתאני.

⁶⁶ F: מן אלְתֵּרֶאדָּף.

⁶⁷ C1 F. שִׁיחַ שָׁגַר מִן תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים –

⁶⁸ C1 F. וְלֹא.

⁶⁹ C1 EF. יִסְקוּל + כִּי.

⁷⁰ C1 EF. אֶ – אֶת עֵינֶיהָ.

⁷¹ C1 EF; וַיִּתְּאוּ דוּד וַיִּתְּאוּ דוּד וַיִּתְּאוּ דוּד: C1 F.

⁷² C1 EF; לְתִפּוֹר: C1 F.

⁷³ C1 E; מִסְתַּכֵּל הוּיָת: C1 F.

⁷⁴ C1 E; עֵת לְתִפּוֹר: C1 F.

⁷⁵ F – לְכַנְעָנִי.

⁷⁶ C1 EF. וְ – וְ.

⁷⁷ C1 F + אֶלְכֵאֶף.

⁷⁸ C1 F + וְהִי.

⁷⁹ C1 F + אִיָּה.

תו	מִן לֹא תִירָאוּם כִּי יִי ⁸⁰	וכשית	וְאִירָא	
תלין	מִן לֹא יִשְׂיָא אִיב בּוֹ ⁸¹	אגואני	הַשִּׂיאָנִי	
תו	מִן כֹּל הוֹלֵךְ עַל גַּחֲזִין ⁸²	צדרך	גַּחֲזִךְ	
תו	מִן וְאִיבְתִּי אֶת־אִיבִיד ⁸³	ועדאווה ⁸³	וְאִיבָה	
איוב	מִן אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרָהּ ⁸⁴ יִשׁוּפְנִי	ידקך	יִשׁוּפֶךְ	
תו	מִן ⁸⁵ וּמַעֲבֹזִין יִדְּיִנוּ עֵ ⁸⁶	משקתך	עַצְבֹּנְךְ	
	מִן ⁸⁷ וְעַלִּי תִשׁוּקְתּוֹ	אנקיאתך	תִּשׁוּקְתְךָ	
תריעשר	מִן קוֹץ וְדִרְדֵּר יַעֲלֶה ⁸⁸	ושוד וחסד	וְקוֹץ וְדִרְדֵּר	
יחזק	מִן לֹא יַחֲגִרוּ בִּיזַע ⁹⁰	קיל ⁸⁹ בערק	בִּיזַעַת	
	מִן אֶלְמוּצַע אֶלְמִדְכוּר ^[ב3]	וקיל בתזעזע ⁹¹		
	מִן וְלֹא זַע מִמֶּנּוּ ⁹²			
	מִן וְאִתְּנִין נָזִים עַל אִפְךָ	אנפך	אִפְךָ	יחזקאל
	מִן ⁹³ כְּתָנֶת פָּסִים	קמצאן	כְּתָנֹת	תו

⁸⁰ B + אלהים. C1 + אלֵה. EF – כי יִי.

⁸¹ E – בו.

⁸² A – כל.

⁸³ BC1 ועדאווה.

⁸⁴ BC1F בסערה.

⁸⁵ BC1 + ממעשנו.

⁸⁶ ABC1EF – ע. F על ה.

⁸⁷ BC1 + אני לדודי.

⁸⁸ A – יַעֲלֶה.

⁸⁹ BF – קיל.

⁹⁰ אלמגאורה BF: לֹא יַחֲגִרוּ בִיזַע.

⁹¹ F ביזעזע.

⁹² ואלתפסיר אן משתקה מן ולא B: מן אלמוצע אלמדכור מן ולא זע ממנו. ממנו – A ואלתפסיר אן משתקה מן לא יחגרו ביזע F. יחגרו ביזע.

⁹³ B + ועשה לו.

תו	הַכְּרוֹבִים	אלצור	מִן כְּרוֹבִים מַעֲשֵׂה חוֹשֵׁב תַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם ⁹⁴
תו	לָהֶט	למע	מִן ⁹⁵ בְּלִהְטֵיהֶם ⁹⁶
תו	וּמַחְלָבָהֶן	ומן אטאיבהם	מִן כָּל ⁹⁷ חֶלֶב יִצְהָר
תורה	וַיִּשָּׁע	ואלתפת	מִן וְאַל יִשְׁעוּ בְּדַבְּרֵי שִׁי ⁹⁸
תו	וַיִּחַר לְקִין	וצעב עלי קין	מִן וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד ⁹⁹
משלי	שָׁאֵת	רפע ¹⁰⁰	מִן שָׁאֵת פְּנֵי רָשָׁע ¹⁰¹
תו		וקיל	מגפרה מן גדול עוני מנשוא ¹⁰²
איוב	פָּצְתָהּ	פצת	מִן ¹⁰³ יִפְצֶה פִּיהוּ: וְאֵרֶ ¹⁰⁴
ישע	נָע ¹⁰⁵	מצטרב ¹⁰⁶	מִן וַיִּנּוּעוּ אַמּוֹת הַסָּפִים
איוב	וְנָד	ומתנוד	מִן לָנוּד לוֹ וּלְנַחֲמוֹ ¹⁰⁷

כרובים תעשה אמ' B: כְּרוֹבִים מַעֲשֵׂה חוֹשֵׁב תַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם. חושב תַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם – A⁹⁴
F כרובים מעשה חושב.

החרטמים + B⁹⁵.

בלטיהם G⁹⁶.

כל – A⁹⁷.

שק' G. שקר B. ש' – A⁹⁸.

ויחר לשמואל B: מִן וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד⁹⁹.

רפעה ABG¹⁰⁰.

לא טוב + B¹⁰¹.

וקיל קבול מן לא תשא שמע שוא יעני הליס לו כנת גבת יא B: מִן גְּדוֹל עוֹנֵי מִנְשׂוֹא¹⁰²
קין אצפל שי [בג]ירה כאן מנד קבול וחית לם תפעל דלך קרבאנד ראבץ עלי מרמי פי
באב מוצע אלקרבאן ומא תקדר תקול מא כאן לי מכנה בל [?]

הבל + B¹⁰³.

ואר' – ABG¹⁰⁴.

ונד + B¹⁰⁵.

וגאיל + B. מטרב A¹⁰⁶.

ונד ומתנוד מן לָנוּד לוֹ וּלְנַחֲמוֹ – AB¹⁰⁷.

תו	שבעתים	באלתמאם ¹⁰⁸	מן יִשְׁלַם שְׁבַעֲתִים ¹⁰⁹
תלין	לִזְטִשׁ	ציקל ¹¹⁰	מן חֲרָבוּ יִלְטִישׁ ¹¹¹
			וקיל סלטאן אסתאד במתאבה שולט ¹¹²
שמואל	חורש	צאנע	מן וְחָרַשׁ לֹא יִמְצֵא [א4]
	לְפַצְעִי	ענד שגתי	מן פִּצַּע תִּחַת פִּצַּע תו
	לְחִבּוּרְתִּי	ענד גראחתי ¹¹³	מן חִבּוּרָה תַּחַת חִבּוּרָה תו
	יֶקֶם	יקתץ	מן לֹא יֶקֶם כִּי כִסְפוֹ הוּא ¹¹⁴ תו
	שֶׁת	גַּעַל	מן שוֹת שְׁתוֹ הַשְּׁעָרָה ¹¹⁵
	הוּחַל	אבתדי	מן וַיִּחַל נָח אִישׁ הָאָדָמָה ¹¹⁶ תו
	יָדוֹן	יחאכם	מן יָדִין עֲמָד בְּצֶדֶק תלין
	בְּשִׁגָם	באלדי ¹¹⁷ איצא לאן אלשין פיה במתאבה	
		אשר מתל ¹¹⁸ שגם זה הבל ואלבא	קוהלת
		דכלת ¹¹⁹ עלי אלשין	

¹⁰⁸ G באלתמאם.

¹⁰⁹ B ונמצא +.

¹¹⁰ B ציקאל.

¹¹¹ B קשתו דרך +.

¹¹² B וקיל סלטאן אסתאד במתאבה שולט –.

¹¹³ C2 ענד גראחתי / לגראחתי.

¹¹⁴ A לא תקום ולא תטור C2: לא יֶקֶם כִּי כִסְפוֹ הוּא. כִּי כִסְפוֹ הוּא –.

¹¹⁵ A ה.

¹¹⁶ A הָאָדָמָה –.

¹¹⁷ C2 אלדי.

¹¹⁸ C2 מתל –.

¹¹⁹ A דכלו. C2 דאכלת.

הַנְּפִילִים אֲלֵאֱלֹאִי¹²⁰ אֲלֵאֲבִטָּאֵל מִן בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן הַנְּפִילִים¹²¹ תו
 יֵצֵר כְּאִטֵּר מִן כִּי יִדְעָתִי אֶת יֵצֵרוֹ תלין
 וַיִּנָּחֵם יוֹי¹²² וּרְגַע אֱלֹהִי¹²³ מִן וַיִּנָּחֵם יוֹי עַל הָרָעָה¹²⁴ תו

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¹²⁰ C2 – אֲלֵאֱלֹאִי.

¹²¹ ושם ראינו את הנפילים C2: בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן הַנְּפִילִים.

¹²² C2 – יוֹי.

¹²³ C2 – אֱלֹהִי.

¹²⁴ C2 + חֵן חַט מִן אִם נָא מִצָּאִית חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ.

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WRESTLERS BEFORE THE KING: IMAGE AND TEXT IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FIRST MURDER

Diana Lipton and Meira Polliack

The secret of change is to focus your energy, not on wrestling with the old, but on building the new. (Dan Millman 1980, adapted)¹

¹ To Geoffrey Khan, with love and admiration, on the occasion of your retirement. May you continue to inspire us all in the spirit of a true mentor. We are honoured to dedicate this article to a foundational scholar of Semitic Studies, a dear mentor and supportive colleague, Professor Geoffrey Khan, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, upon the occasion of his retirement.

Diana Lipton: I was privileged to attend Geoffrey's inspiring lectures during my graduate studies at Cambridge, and later I had the pleasure of co-editing with him a Festschrift for his colleague and predecessor, my former PhD supervisor, Robert P. Gordon.

Meira Polliack: I was privileged to be the first (1993) among scores of Geoffrey's doctoral students at Cambridge. Geoffrey's innovative work on biblical syntax, medieval Hebrew, Arabic, and Judaeo-Arabic sources (a few of which we discuss in this article) enabled their recovery and appreciation in the study of the history of biblical translation and

1.0. Cain and Abel on the Streets of Tel-Aviv

Strolling on Allenby Street in the spring of 2021, during a short break between Covid waves, we came across a striking piece of graffiti art (Figure 1). Aided by the internet and our students, we gathered that the subject is ‘the first murder’, and that the artist, who goes by the name Wonky Monkey (*sic*), was born in Be’er Sheva and studied at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design.

Figure 1: *Cain and Abel*, © Wonky Monkey, Tel-Aviv



Photo: Diana Lipton

Cain killing Abel is not Wonky Monkey’s only biblical scene. He has also painted David and Goliath and Ezekiel’s Valley of the

exegesis. His model as scholar and mentor inspired me, leaving a profound and lasting effect on my life and career, for which I feel blessed and grateful.

Dry Bones,² and those images too were accompanied by texts in English. But whereas there he quoted verses from the Hebrew Bible, in ‘our’ scene, unexpectedly perhaps, he quotes from an English translation of the story of Qabil (Cain) and Habil (Abel) in the Qur’ān (Surat al-Ma’idah 5.27–32). Here follows an English translation (not the one the artist used) of the full Qurānic passage excerpted by Wonky Monky:

Relate to them in truth [O Prophet] the story of Adam’s two sons—how each offered a sacrifice: one’s offering was accepted while the other’s was not, so he threatened [his brother], “I will kill you!” His brother replied, “Allah only accepts [the offering] of the sincerely devout. If you raise your hand to kill me, I will not raise mine to kill you, because I fear Allah—the Lord of all worlds. I want to let you bear your sin against me along with your other sins, then you will be one of those destined to the Fire. And that is the reward of the wrongdoers.” Still, the other convinced himself to kill his own brother, so he killed him—becoming a loser. Then Allah sent a crow digging [a grave] in the ground [for a dead crow], in order to show him how to bury the corpse of his brother. He cried, “Alas! Have I [even] failed to be like this crow and bury the corpse of my brother?” So he became regretful. That is why We ordained for the Children of Israel that whoever takes a life—unless as a punishment for murder or mischief in the land—it will be as if they killed all of humanity; and whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity.³

² <https://cargocollective.com/wonkymonky/LIFE-IS>

³ <https://quran.com/5?startingVerse=27>

In this paper, we are interested in how art can function as reception exegesis, reviving forgotten or repressed reader responses to ancient texts and generating new readings. In Wonky Monky's depiction of Cain and Abel, the word 'God' is enlarged, drawing our attention, intentionally or otherwise, to God's more pronounced role in the Qurānic version of the story than in the Hebrew narrative. In the Qur'ān, God shows Cain how to dispose of his brother's body by watching a crow dig a grave. This is an example of Qurānic gap-filling. The biblical narrative does not address what Cain did with Abel's corpse, although, unlike the Qurānic retelling, it emphasises Abel's spilt blood in the context of God's reproach to Cain:

Cain said to his brother Abel. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' ¹⁰ And the Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth' (Gen. 4.8).⁴

A gap in the narrative that neither the biblical text nor the Qur'ān attempt to fill is the identity of the murder weapon. The silence could be taken to imply that Cain strangled Abel with his bare hands. Yet God's reference to blood may hint that Abel's

⁴ Biblical citations in English are from the online *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition* (NRSVUE): <https://www.biblegateway.com/>.

death was bloody: ‘And the Lord said, “What have you done? Listen, your brother’s **blood is crying out** to me from the ground!’ (Gen. 4.10). Blood is especially prominent in the biblical Hebrew phrasing, in which the noun and verb are in the plural. Today, this is understood as an abstract plural that denotes ‘bloodshed, guilt due to bloodshed’ rather than ‘blood’ (see *HALOT*, 225, meaning no. 5), but some pre-modern commentators explained the plural form in God’s speech as an allegorical reference to Abel’s future descendants, had he lived. The Ashkenazi medieval exegete, Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Itzhak b. 1040, Troyes, northern France) offers two options, the symbolic-allegorical, which he seems to favour, and a graphic talmudic reading according to which Cain stabbed or slashed Abel’s body many times:

‘your brother’s blood’ (Gen. 4.10):—Heb. דָּם is plural—‘bloods’—his blood and the blood of his possible descendants. Another explanation for why the plural is used: he inflicted upon him many wounds, because he knew not whence his soul would depart [i.e., which blow would prove fatal].
(https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Genesis.4.10.1?lang=bi&with=About&lang2=en, based on Rosenbaum and Silbermann 1929–1934)⁵

Most interestingly, for our purposes, among the classical Hebrew medieval commentators is the leading Spanish exegete, Abraham Ibn Ezra (b. 1087, Tudela, then part of Muslim Spain),

⁵ Rashi’s first explanation is based on a midrash in *Genesis Rabbah* 22.9. His second explanation paraphrases a similar interpretation found in b. *Sanhedrin* 37b.

whose interpretations were often informed by Judaeo-Arabic, including Karaite, exegesis from the east. Ibn Ezra sums up the matter with a typically incisive comment on Gen. 4.8:

‘And Cain spoke’: it appears to me that Cain related to Abel the full account of the rebuke with which God had reproached him. Those born on a dark day [i.e., whose minds are blurry] ask how did Cain kill Abel since no swords were yet in existence? This is a foolish question. He could have choked him or killed him with a stone or a piece of wood, inasmuch as there were thousands of stones and chunks of wood around.
https://www.sefaria.org/Ibn_Ezra_on_Genesis.4.8.1?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en, based on Strickman and Silver 1988–2004)

Like Rashi’s brutal talmudic reading, Ibn Ezra’s linguistic-contextual reasoning may have been informed, in part, by the emphatic reference to Abel’s blood. We will return to this subject later.

Similar to Ibn Ezra, artists throughout the ages have filled the gap, depicting Cain poised to murder his brother with various weapons that might have been at hand, including an agricultural implement, an axe, and the jawbone of an ass. With Wonky Monky’s choice of ‘candy *cane*’ (Figure 1), bilingualism and multiculturalism come together. As well as explicating his image with an English translation of the Qurānic text, the artist draws on an English language pun on the name of the world’s first murderer.

The aspect of Wonky Monky’s depiction that most intrigued us was not, however, the weapon, but rather what we considered at the time to be an odd feature. Cain has raised his right arm to strike Abel, and *with his left foot, is pinning his brother*

down. We soon discovered that similar poses appear in many visual representations of Cain killing Abel from the tenth century to today, from east and west.⁶ And while art historians have had plenty to say about Cain's possible murder weapon (Henderson 1961; Barb 1972; Scheirer 2015), we have found no discussion of his unusual posture. We considered the possibility that a detail in the biblical text or an early interpretation may have generated this persistent visual motif, but although *וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל-אָבִיחֵל אָחִיו* 'and Cain rose up to his brother Abel' (Gen. 4.8), seemed to be a possible candidate, we were not satisfied.

Our attempt to find a textual source for this motif in artistic depictions of the first murder led us on a long journey that ended with what we see as a fascinating glimpse into the development of reader responses through the ages. In this article, we suggest a possible link between this popular visual motif and at least one ancient Jewish exegetical text, a midrash on the first murder, preserved in the early collection known as *Genesis Rabbah* (edited in the Land of Israel/Roman Palestine, fifth century CE). We will also present some medieval Jewish sources, particularly from the Islamic world, which establish a marginal, though persistent, subversive strand in Jewish exegesis, from ancient to medieval times, that problematises God's role in the first murder.

⁶ We have illustrated this paper with a few paradigmatic examples. Others include Cappella Palatina (N.D.); San Michele (1078); Koberger (1483); Titian (1543); Unknown (1601); Wise (1881); Chagall (1960).

2.0. Visual Representations of the First Murder: A Brief Survey

Pre-Renaissance representations of the first murder usually took the form of what we might now call ‘story boards’, as exemplified by an ivory panel from Italy (Figure 2, facing page).

Nothing here distinguishes Cain from Abel. Each wears clothes that were presumably considered appropriate at the time for young men in agricultural professions. The panel is ingeniously divided into two by a column that is also part of the scene. At left, God’s hand reaches out from behind the ornate representation of a cloud or celestial body to signal his choice of Abel’s lamb over Cain’s wheat. At right, two episodes are compressed. Cain bends over the prostrate Abel, strangling him with his hands—there is no weapon—and pinning Abel’s left hand with his left foot. Abel looks over his shoulder at the previous scene, creating an unmistakable link between Cain’s attack and his rejected offering. Above them, God appears as a full upper-body image. He is ostentatiously ignoring the fight to the death going on just below. His entire body is pivoted towards a cowering Cain, his hand extended in a gesture of interrogation and/or casting of blame: Where is your brother Abel?

Feet and hands feature prominently in these two panels (Figure 2). In the ‘offering’ panel, both brothers have one foot flat on the ground and the other with heel raised, mirroring their raised offerings. In the ‘murder’ panel, Cain has raised his left foot, to pin down Abel, and his right heel is raised towards God.

Figure 2: *Cain and Abel*, ca. 1084, ivory panel from the Cathedral of Salerno, Italy, Louvre Museum, Paris



Photo: Jastrow

His bent knee also points directly towards God. God's right hand, as we might expect, is the largest and most powerful of all the hands depicted in these panels, yet he is not using it to separate Cain and Abel. Finally, with his left hand, God holds a staff that creates a direct line with Abel's left hand, which he is using to strangle Abel. Was the artist hinting at divine complicity?

In some visual representations, such as the twelfth-century mosaic from Sicily seen in Figure 3 (overleaf), the brothers are physically distinguished from each other. Here, Cain's tunic is blue, while Abel's is white, and Cain is bearded and looks older than Abel. Moreover, they are named, and part of the biblical narrative appears in Latin.

Cain wields an axe above Abel's head, and pins down Abel's left foot with his left foot. Though larger and haloed, God is part of the picture. His blue and white robes, echoing theirs, perhaps imply that he has not taken sides. God does not appear in the accompanying mosaic that depicts the offerings, but the mere juxtaposition may suggest a causal link. The murder is taking place

directly in front of him, but again God's entire attention is devoted to post-murder Abel. The text spells out his question: Where is your brother Abel? Here, too, God's right hand is the largest, yet it offers no active help. Again, the artist may have wanted to emphasise that, although God *could* have extended his hand to save Abel, he did not.

Figure 3: Can killing Abel and being punished by God, Mosaic, 1140–1170, Palatine Chapel, Norman Palace, Palermo, Sicily, Italy.



Photos: © Manuel Cohen

In the fifteenth-century manuscript from Germany in Figure 4 (facing page), the murder is again juxtaposed with God's choice of Abel's sacrifice, linking the two events. As well as being named, the brothers are distinguished by clothing and tonsure. This time Cain wields a jawbone. Abel sprawls on the ground, already bleeding from the head, with Cain literally standing on him. Here, as in the images above, Cain's wheat sheaf looks robust and healthy. His

sacrifice was not rejected because he tried to get away with an inferior product, as suggested in some textual traditions.⁷ In contrast to the earlier depictions (see Figures 2–3), God is not visible.

Figure 4: *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, Northwest Germany ca. 1360, Darmstadt: University and State Library



Photo: Darmstadt University and State Library, <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/Hs-2505/0065>

⁷ See, e.g., “And Cain brought an offering [*mincha*] to God from the fruit of the land [Gen. 4.3]—from the leftovers, [similar to] the evil tenant who eats the first fruits and gives the owner of the field the stunted ones” (Genesis Rabbah 22.5, Sefaria Community Translation: <https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit Rabbah.22.5?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en>). Neither the Bible nor the Qur’ān give a reason for God’s preference. The Qur’ān states simply that “each offered a sacrifice: Abel’s offering was accepted while Cain’s was not.” In Islamic tradition, too, there were gap-fillings implying Cain’s sacrifice was less worthy. For detailed discussion of the comparative sources on this and other gap-fillings in our story in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, see Gregg (2015, 3–113).

By the sixteenth century, visual representations of the first murder tell a different story, plausibly connected to wider hermeneutic and other concerns in the Renaissance period, such as ‘exploring the expressive potential of the idealised male nude’ (Marshall 2013, 168).

As exemplified below, Cain and Abel are often portrayed as naked and very obviously wrestling.⁸ This may attest to a growing interest at the time in the human psyche and emotions (see Meek and Sullivan 2015, 107–74; Ferente 2015),⁹ as well as in the male body and the sport of wrestling, as exemplified in Figure 5 (facing page).

Before the Renaissance, artists had generally avoided the subject of fratricide. For example, Romulus was often shown suckling the wolf alongside Remus, but not strangling him (see Marshall 2013, 175). With Cain and Abel, by contrast, Renaissance artists actively investigated fratricide. Unlike their predecessors, they chose to home in on a specific moment in the story, most often the murder itself. Gossaert depicts Cain wielding his

⁸ Marshall (2013, 172–73) notes great interest in wrestling in the 15th and 16th centuries, and indeed it is central to his interpretation of Renaissance and Baroque representations of Cain and Abel. He suggests that viewers at the time would have been sufficiently aware of the rules of wrestling and what we now call hand-to-hand combat to know that Cain was ‘fighting dirty’. Marshall proposes that artists were inviting their viewers to see Cain unfavourably, in contrast to Samson who was portrayed as a noble warrior who fought by the rules.

⁹ In Jewish reception history emotional emphasis becomes paramount in the exegetical works of Don Isaac Abrabanel; cf. Polliack and Zoref (2021, 1–22).

weapon, a jawbone, above Cain. There is no attempt to tell the larger story, though. The offerings are absent and so is God. As in many other Renaissance images, Cain looks older or perhaps just wilder than Abel. Despite significant variations in artistic interpretation and emphasis, one element remains consistent: Cain's foot is pinning Abel to the ground.

Figure 5: Jan Gossaert, *Cain killing Abel with a jawbone*, 1525, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

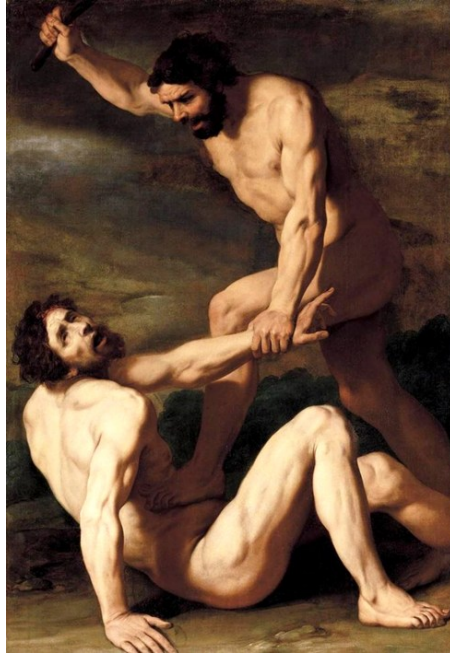


Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Daniel Crespi's depiction of Cain and Abel (Figure 6, overleaf) seems more indebted than the examples we have brought thus far to the identification of Abel with Christ in Christian typology (González Holguín 2021; see also Byron 2007). Cain's foot retains its by now centuries-old position, pinning Abel's body to

the ground, but this time that Abel's straightened hand, horizontal to Cain's bent foot, may be intended to create the image of a cross, at the centre of the painting.

Figure 6: Daniele Crespi, *Cain Killing Abel*, 1618–1620, Private collection



Moving away from the foot posture we have seen repeatedly above, other depictions of the first murder focus on what happened next. This seventeenth-century Islamic illustrated manuscript in Figure 7 (facing page) centres on a tree. At its left, Qabil (Cain), dressed in red, is carrying on his back the dead body of Habil (Abel), dressed in blue and tied with white ropes, to the place where, as instructed by the two crows to the right of the tree, he will bury him. The crows appear to mimic the posture of the two brothers, while the peaceful garden imagery stands in striking contrast to the events. The colours of the brothers' robes

mirror the flowers on the ground where Abel will be buried. The image reflects the Qurānic narrative's emphasis on Cain's remorse, and his admission that the crows are superior to him.

Figure 7: Crow teaching Qabil (Cain) how to bury his brother (painting, recto; text, verso), fol. 18 from a manuscript of the *Qisas al-Anbiya* ('*Tales of the Prophets*') by Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Nayshaburi, seventeenth century, Ottoman (Middle East), Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums



Photo: Harvard Art Museums, Courtesy Harvard Art Museums

(<https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/>

It is tempting to think that representations of details from the Qurānic narrative that do not appear in the Hebrew Bible might have influenced non-Islamic artists, such as the nineteenth-century sculptor and painter, Alexandre Falguières, who also

chose to depict Cain carrying Abel (Figure 8). What looks like bark around Cain's lower torso and right leg functions to cover his genitals, while Abel's are exposed. Perhaps this, too, hints at Cain's shame.

Figure 8: *Cain portant le corps d'Abel*, Alexandre Falguières, 1876, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Carcassonne



Photo: Didier Descouens

These last two images (Figures 7 and 8) draw attention to Cain's feet planted firmly on the ground, in contrast to Abel's feet suspended above it. Perhaps this foreshadows Cain's punishment: to walk the world as a wanderer (Hebrew נָעַד וְנָדָד Gen. 4.12, 14). We wondered whether the fact that God punished Cain by means

of his feet may have inspired artists to make this organ prominent, almost a weapon, in the murder scene (Figures 2–6). But although some ancient narratives do emphasise the analogical connection between the weapon used to commit the crimes and the instrument of punishment, we were unable to find exegetical traditions that made a direct link between Cain’s punishment and the use of his feet in the murder. Moreover, the biblical narrative does not mention Cain’s feet in its brief description of his future as a wanderer (Gen. 4.11–12).

Why, then, did artists place so much emphasis on Cain’s foot, when there seems to be no indication in the biblical text or its commentaries that it was connected to the murder? The source of this intriguing tradition can perhaps be found in artistic depictions of a very different type of conflict.

3.0. Unlocking the Significance of the Foot:

Gérôme’s Pollice Verso

So far, we have shown that a feature of Wonky Monky’s graffiti representation of the first murder that stands out is Cain’s use of his foot to pin down Abel. From tenth-century Italy to twenty-first-century Tel Aviv, this motif occurs frequently in images of the first murder (see Figures 1–6, above), but rarely in other contexts in art history. We believe that we have identified a possible key to unlocking its significance in *Pollice Verso* (Figure 9, overleaf), a painting of a gladiator by the nineteenth-century French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904). While there is no connection between Gérôme’s painting and the Cain and Abel narrative,

it depicts a physical and psychological moment that resonates strongly with the images above.

Figure 9: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pollice Verso*, 1872, oil on canvas, height 96.5 cm (37.9 in), Phoenix Art Museum, museum purchase, 1968.⁵²



Pollice Verso, ‘with a turned thumb’, depicts the moment in Roman games when a gladiator has defeated his opponent and awaits a gesture from the emperor, the crowd, or the organiser of the games indicating whether he must release or kill his victim.¹⁰ Gérôme, a painter and sculptor in the ‘Academicist’ school, was well-known for his depictions of classical, mythological, and

¹⁰ There is a debate concerning whether an up- or downturned thumb signaled that a gladiator should be put to death. Corbeill (1997) argues that a thumbs up indicates a death sentence.

historical subjects.¹¹ His decision to depict the victorious gladiator with his foot on his defeated opponent is more than an obvious way of signifying defeat. As we soon discovered, it reflects ancient images in mosaics and frescoes of gladiators in this exact position. Gérôme draws the viewer's gaze to the floor of the *arena*, the place of combat, but, literally, a sandy space or simply 'sand', which was used to soak up the blood of animals and, less often, gladiators, that was spilled during the games. Gérôme's sand is strewn with bodies and weapons, and vertical threads of light create a connection between the spectators, who will decide the fate of the defeated gladiator, and the ground on which his blood will be spilled if they decide against him. Both gladiators are looking towards the crowd, the defeated gladiator raising his arm in what must be a pleading gesture. The point is this: life and death are not in the hands of the gladiators themselves, but in the hands of one or more of their spectators.¹²

¹¹ For positive reassessments of, among other themes, Gérôme's methodology, his ethnography, his relationship with his historical subjects, and his standing as an artist, see Allan and Morton (eds) (2010).

¹² On gladiator games and more in ancient Rome and beyond, see Poliakoff (1987). On the avoidance of deaths in gladiator games, see Carter (2006/2007, 99), who writes about an epitaph for a gladiator that exhorts victorious gladiators to kill their opponents:

Yet Urbicus' anxious exhortation to kill is remarkable because it is almost unparalleled. Of the hundreds of epitaphs surviving from throughout the Roman world, few provide anything like the homicidal declaration made here. If the gladiator's death is mentioned at all, his opponent is almost never blamed for it; *instead blame is assigned to the Fates or even to the deceased's own choice.*

4.0. Ancient Images of Roman Gladiators

It is hardly surprising that gladiators were a popular subject for ancient Roman mosaics and frescoes.¹³ For nearly a thousand years, gladiator games took place throughout the Roman Empire, from western Asia to the British Isles. They began in Rome in the first centuries BCE, as a component of funeral services (Beck 2022). This may seem at first glance to be an odd combination, but although gladiators aimed to be victorious, not to kill their opponents, gladiator games certainly dramatised the *spectacle* of human life and death, and often involved animal deaths (Carter 2006/2007, 99, 106, 112; see also Futrell 1997/2001, 15).

Figure 10 (facing page) is a detail of a 28-metre-long mosaic from the fourth century CE. It was discovered in 1834 on the Borghese estate at Torrenova just outside Rome and is now located in Rome's Villa Borghese.¹⁴ In this scene, the victor, sword in hand, is pinning down the hand of a defeated gladiator with his foot. He looks up expectantly towards what is presumably the source of the verdict. In the lower right scene, what seem to be drops of blood are shown between the wounded victim and the knife lying on the ground.

A first-century ce fresco from the tomb of Vestorius Priscus (Figure 11, facing page) shows a similar scene, though this time the victor seems to be pinning down the defeated gladiator's foot (Tuck 2014, 426).

¹³ In addition to the examples below, see the Verona Mosaic (N.D.).

¹⁴ See the gladiator mosaics of the Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy at <https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/en/collezione/arte-antica>.

Figure 10: Gladiators, fragment, Roman, 300–400 CE, marble and limestone mosaic, Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy



Photo: Daderot

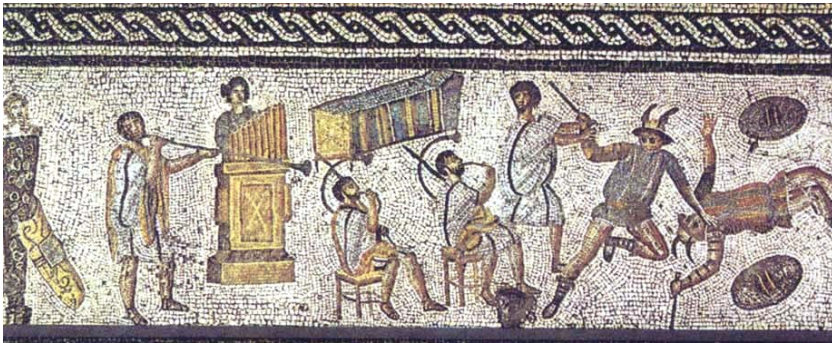
Figure 11: Tomb of Vestorius Priscus, fresco with gladiator (Thraex, left, Oplomachus, right), Pompeii



Photo: © Marco M. Vigato

In the following detail from a first-century CE mosaic panel from Libya depicting Roman entertainments (Figure 12), the victorious gladiator restrains the loser with his left hand, while a third party—perhaps a referee—restrains the victor’s right hand. Both the victor and the third party are looking away from the defeated gladiator, presumably awaiting a decision from the emperor, the crowd, or the organiser of the games.

Figure 12: Mosaic showing Roman entertainments from the first or second century CE, from Dar Buc Ammera villa, Zliten, The Archaeological Museum of Tripoli, Tripoli, Libya



These ancient gladiator images may have served as sources of inspiration, or perhaps even reusable blueprints, for artists seeking ways of portraying the first murder. This seems especially plausible because some of the earliest known visual representations of Cain and Abel emerged from Italy, the cradle of the ancient Roman Empire. Italian artists may have seen these gladiator scenes in their own immediate surroundings. The ancient gladiator scenes may have suggested a *visual* language with which artists could articulate a complex reading of the Cain and Abel narrative that simultaneously expresses a subversive theological position and addresses a question that was hard to ask and harder

to answer: was God not ultimately responsible for Abel's death by failing to prevent it as a Roman emperor would usually have done by intervening to prevent a victorious gladiator from killing his victim? It is opportune at this juncture to recall Carter's claim (above fn. 14) that death was not the usual outcome of gladiator games, and that when it did occur, the Fates were more likely to be blamed than the gladiators.

5.0. God's Guilt as an Onlooker: A Brief Exegetical Survey

Most of the images of the first murder we have shown here, especially when viewed in the light of gladiator scenes, preserve the moment when divine intervention could have occurred. In this respect, they are like the many visual representations of the *'Akedah* that show Abraham with his knife poised to kill Isaac. But in the case of the first murder, unlike the *'Akedah*, there was no divine intervention to stop the violent act. In our story, God did not intervene, even though what is about to occur seems to be the outcome of a previous divine intervention: choosing one offering and rejecting the other. He merely issues a warning about the need to control anger, leaving the responsibility squarely on Cain's shoulders.

Sa'adiah Gaon (b. Egypt, 882, d. Baghdad, 942) was the first exegete to ask a direct question about God's role as an onlooker in the first murder. The question is found in a section of his Judaeo-Arabic commentary on Genesis, where he seems to be responding to a Jewish polemicist on this matter: "Why did not

God the all-wise and omnipotent not prevent Cain from murdering Abel?”¹⁵

In a Hebrew *piyyuṭ* of his own composition, Sa‘adiah responds to a similar question, which he attributes to the ninth-century Jewish heretic Hiwi al-Balkhi (active in Afghanistan):

About your [Hiwi] claims: why did He [God] not prevent him [Cain, from killing Abel] and his [Cain’s] offspring up to his great grandson were not destroyed? This you might have said had there only been one world and one existence, but since there is another world [the world to come] everything is punishable.¹⁶

As impressive as these comments are for preserving Jewish theological reckonings with the Cain and Abel story, they do not offer a continuous reading of Genesis 4. In our limited review of exegesis of the Cain and Abel, we have found only one text that stands out as a subversive reading of Genesis 4, and mirrors almost exactly the artistic depictions we discussed above. A thought-provoking midrash embedded in Genesis Rabbah 22.9, attributed to Rabbi Shim‘on bar Yoḥai, retells the murder story in the context of Roman wrestling. The attribution to the admired figure of Rabbi Shim‘on bar Yoḥai suggests it was widely known among Jews in the ancient period.¹⁷

¹⁵ For Judaeo-Arabic, see Zucker 1984, 89.

¹⁶ Accessible in Hebrew at <https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il>. For additional examples of the genre of ‘Questions on the Bible’ by Hiwi and other Jewish authors, most of which survived in the Cairo Geniza, see Schechter (1903); Drory (1988, 91–93; 123–25; 185–89).

¹⁷ We thank Prof. Chaim Milikowsky for this point, oral communication.

R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai said: "It is difficult to say this thing, and the mouth cannot utter it plainly. Think of two athletes wrestling before the king; had the king wished, he could have separated them. But he did not so desire, and one overcame the other and killed him, he [the victim] crying out [before he died], 'Let my cause be pleaded before the king!' Even so, *The voice of your brother's blood is crying against me from the ground* [Gen. 4.9]."

In Shim'on bar Yoḥai's ingenious reading, God's dialogue with Cain, including the plural forms of blood and crying, and especially the Biblical Hebrew preposition usually meaning 'to me' (לִּי), are interpreted as God's self-condemnation for his own failure to intervene. The sage seems to underpin this point by reading לִּי in wordplay with עָלַי (in the sense of 'against me, condemning me'). It is precisely this, God's self-condemnation, that "the mouth cannot utter plainly" and needs to be explained.

The explanation takes two forms. First, as mentioned above, the description attributed to God of Abel's blood/s crying (plural דָּמָה) from the ground (Gen. 4.10), the same ground which God describes in the immediate context (Gen. 4.11) as having "opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood/s (again the plural for דָּמָה) from your hand."¹⁸ If only God had opened *his*

¹⁸ In b. Sanhedrin 37b (see above, Rashi) the plural form 'blood/s' is explained as the result of a brutal murder which left Abel's blood "all over the place." This point is also picked up in the continuation of our midrash above (Genesis Rabbah 22.9), which also stresses the plurality of the form blood/s: 'Abel's soul could not go up above, for as yet no soul had gone up to there; and below it could not endure, for as yet no man had been buried there, and [so] his blood was strewn upon the

mouth or extended *his* hand, Rabbi Shim'on might have elaborated, he could have prevented the death taking place in front of him. Second, the comparison of God to a king—who, given the context, must have been a Roman Emperor—at a wrestling match allows the midrashic interpretation to hint that, just as the emperor could have signalled to prevent the death, so could God. Indeed, the midrashist may have intended his readers to take his analogy several steps further. First, the emperor initiated the gladiator games for reasons including entertainment for himself and his subjects, but they were primarily a demonstration of his absolute power, in this case over life and death. Did God likewise initiate the conflict between Cain and Abel, intentionally provoking Cain's jealousy by choosing Abel's gift over his? In other words, did God, like the Roman emperor, put Cain and Abel in the ring? Second, even if life and death were at the heart of the spectacle of the Roman games, Roman emperors (and other gladiator owners) went to great lengths to prevent the deaths of their gladiators.¹⁹ God, by contrast, allowed one of his gladiators to die, as the biblical narrative itself may have intended to emphasise through God's own words. The earth opened its mouth to swallow Abel's blood, but God did not open his mouth to intervene in the murder. The earth took Abel's blood from Cain's *hand*,

trees and the stones' (namely, everywhere, beseeching God, as an abomination and casting of blame on Him).

¹⁹ Carter (2006, 106) emphasises that most gladiators survived, and many went on to be wealthy, respected members of society.

but God did not extend his hand with a signal to prevent Cain from killing Abel.²⁰

6.0. Some Tentative Conclusions

We hope to have shown in this paper that the midrash attributed to Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai about Cain and Abel corresponds closely to a host of visual interpretations of the first murder, a few of which we examined above. But what, if any, is the relationship between them? There is reason to believe that exegetes were well-aware of artistic representations of the 'Akedah and may even have been influenced by them.²¹ Perhaps a similar process occurred, albeit later and in smaller numbers, with depictions of the first murder.

²⁰ The mention of Cain's hand may also allude to its role in the murder, whether by strangling or holding a weapon.

²¹ See Goodman (2013, 18):

Visual artists were drawn to the story [of the Akedah] very early on. The wall paintings at the synagogue at Dura-Europos and the frescoes and the catacombs of Callisto and Priscilla go back to the third century. By the end of the fourth, bishops Gregory of Nyssa (in modern Turkey) and Augustine of Hippo (in modern Algeria, fifteen hundred miles to the west) had each noted that likenesses of the story—on wall paintings, mosaics, sarcophagi, and frescoes—were everywhere. "Abraham's deed," Augustine wrote, was so famous that it recurs in the mind without any study or reflection, and is in fact repeated in so many tongues, and portrayed in so many places, that no-one can pretend to shut his eyes or ears from it." Several hundred images from late antiquity survive. *Gregory believed that the*

Another plausible response is that visual and textual representations of the first murder emanated from the same source: depictions of Roman gladiators. Rabbis from Roman Palestine were clearly aware of the Roman games, and this led at least one of them, Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai, to imagine Cain and Abel as wrestlers in an arena.²² A separate midrash in *Genesis Rabbah* likewise envisages Cain and Abel as wrestlers, though without reference to the context.²³ We found no discussion by art historians of Cain's striking pose in so many depictions of the first murder, but the twin facts that (a) they correspond closely to representations of Roman gladiators, and (b) the earliest examples are in Italy, suggest that for these artists, too, gladiators were their source of inspiration.

The decision to represent Cain and Abel—whether textually or visually—in a Roman arena has at least one vitally important consequence. The biblical narrative *implies* that God was not present when Cain killed Abel, but it does not state explicitly that he was absent. Once the first brothers are likened to athletes fighting before the king, it is impossible to keep God out of the picture. Just as there would have been no gladiator games without the

artists of his day were out ahead of the exegetes who worked with words [our italics].

²² See Williams (2023) on the gradual disappearance of the gladiator motif in the transmission of this *mas̥hal*, as later audiences lost familiarity with the Roman games.

²³ “*And Cain rose up against his brother Abel* etc. R. Yohanan said: Abel was stronger than Cain, for the expression *rose up* can only imply that he [Cain] lay beneath him” (22.8); see Milikowsky (2005, 119).

emperor or his representative, so Cain and Abel could only have been fighting in front of God. This raises a question about the extent to which the analogy between God and Roman emperor is part of a broader tradition of holding God at least partly responsible for the first murder.

We have noted that the Qurānic telling of our story is cautious in its criticism of Cain, which may have implications for its attitude towards God's role in this episode. Following the typological link between Abel and Christ, Christian exegesis is strongly condemnatory of Cain, as are some ancient apocryphal Jewish and Christian works, which survive in Greek.²⁴ This leaves little room for implicating God. Most layers of ancient and medieval Jewish, Christian, and Islamic exegesis go in a similar direction.²⁵ In the midrash attributed to Shim'on bar Yoḥai, however,

²⁴ The Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo (ca. 20 BCE–50 CE) addresses Cain and Abel in several of his works, see Gregg (2015, 36), who shows how “Philo’s counsel extends beyond the dangers to individual souls in order to warn against the social and institutional effects of unrighteousness.” Gnostic works from the first centuries, such as *The Apocalypse of Adam*, also appear to diminish God’s responsibility; see Layton (1987, 42); Meyer (2009, 345). Cf., further, Gregg’s (2015, 41–74) detailed survey of early Christian sources, and Byron (2011, 345).

²⁵ Eastern Christian Arabic and post-Qurānic Islamic sources merit further investigation in this respect. For a thorough survey of early Islamic sources, see Tottoli (2011); Kueny (2008); Gregg (2015, 75–108). In his illuminating ‘Comparative Summary’, Gregg (2015, 109–13) emphasises that among the three monotheistic traditions, “the earliest question—what caused Cain to kill his brother?—dominates Jewish endeavours to make sense of the story” (111). Nevertheless, the subversive

and perhaps also in some Christian art, we identified a more nuanced and subversive strand, which may also be present in a few medieval Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew exegetical works, mainly from the Islamic milieu.²⁶ This suggests that Jews continued to ponder the question of God's role in the story. In this subversive strand, God bears ultimate responsibility for Abel's death. Eyes looked up to him, as they were raised towards Roman emperors, political tyrants, seeking intervention, yet none was forthcoming. To paraphrase Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai, this is indeed a very difficult thing to say.

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Allan, Scott, and Mary Morton (eds). 2010. *Reconsidering Gêrôme*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications.

reading of God's role in this respect (Genesis Rabbah 22.9) is mentioned in but a short paragraph:

The rabbi boldly raises two questions, the first is explicit: why, God, did you not stop the violence before it brought death? And implicit, through the characterisation of Cain and Abel, there is a differently framed question of theodicy, of divine justice: why was the righteous innocent brother not protected? An answer is awaited from God. (28)

²⁶ See our above discussion of Sa'adya and Hiwi. Karaite authors, including Yefet ben Eli, do not appear to attest this strand. We thank Dr Arye Zoref for his help on this point. The Karaites' Mu'atazilitic ideology, upholding God's absolute righteousness, may have prevented such a subversive reading in their otherwise literary and contextual exegesis of our story.

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View from Mt Korek, near Rawanduz, KRG Iraq, 27 March 2019; photographer: Dorota Molin; used with permission

D. NEO-ARAMAIC

NEO-ARAMAIC 2_{MS} AND 2_{FS} GENITIVE PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES IN THE LIGHT OF EARLIER ARAMAIC

Steven E. Fassberg

Aramaic has split into many dialects over the course of three millennia and, together with the notable differences among the dialects, there is also a large degree of continuity with the earlier stages of the language. This is well exemplified in the history of the 2_{MS} and 2_{FS} genitive pronominal suffixes. For most of the long history of Aramaic, the 2_{MS} suffix has remained constant, while the 2_{FS} suffix has developed different, but clearly related, realisations. In the modern period, however, both suffixes have been replaced by other forms in the large group of dialects known as North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) and they no longer resemble the pronouns of the preceding phases of the language. The NENA suffixes also differ from their counterparts in Western Neo-Aramaic and Neo-Mandaic, both of which branches show striking resemblance to earlier forms. The suffixes of Central Neo-Aramaic reveal an intermediate position between NENA, on the one hand, and Western Neo-Aramaic and Neo-Mandaic, on the other.

I shall survey briefly the history of the 2MS and 2FS suffixes in pre-modern Aramaic (following Fitzmyer's [1979] periodisation), and, in the light of the earlier periods, try to explain the processes that led to the forms in NENA.

1.0. Proto-Semitic and Proto-Aramaic

The generally accepted Proto-Semitic reconstruction of the 2MS and 2FS genitive pronominal suffixes posits forms with anceps vowels: MS *-kã*, FS *-kĩ* (Brockelmann 1908, 309).¹ The classic Proto-Aramaic reconstruction of these suffixes (ibid., 310) recreates only a short vowel in the 2MS *-ka* and an anceps vowel in the 2FS *-kĩ*. In the past few decades, however, some scholars have argued that early Aramaic also had a long vowel in the 2MS suffix.²

Genitive pronominal suffixes in Aramaic were preceded by a connecting vowel, which was originally a case ending. The 2MS connecting vowel is a reflex of the old accusative case ending *-a*, thus **-a-ka* > *-āk*. The lengthening of the presuffixal vowel is unexpected and difficult to explain, since short vowels do not lengthen in Aramaic.³ In the 2FS suffix, it is the genitive case ending *-i* that has survived and generated vowels of different quality and length, depending on the dialect: **-i-kĩ* > *-ē/ik(i)*. In the case

¹ Hasselbach (2004) and Huehnergard (2019, 53 fn. 8, 54) reconstruct a final short vowel.

² Most notably Kutscher (1972, 24–25); Beyer (1984, 79, 424); Cook (1990, 60); Qimron (1992).

³ For a summary of the different explanations for the lengthening, see Fassberg (1996, 18 fn. 42).

of both the masculine and feminine forms, the vowel of the case ending is the result of vowel harmony with the final original vowel of the pronominal suffix.

2.0. Pre-Modern Aramaic

2.1. Old and Official Aramaic

Only the 2MS suffix is attested in Old Aramaic inscriptions, where it is written *-k*, e.g., in the Sefire inscriptions (KAI 222–224) *ʾrqlk* ‘you land’, *brk* ‘your son’, *bytk* ‘your house’, *lšnk* ‘your tongue’ (Degen 1969, 56). While most scholars have assumed the vocalisation *-āk*, some have argued that *-k* is a defective spelling of *-kā*.⁴

The Official Aramaic texts from Egypt provide examples of the 2MS orthography *-k*, again presumably *-āk* (Muraoka and Porten 2003, 46–49), whose pronunciation would appear to be confirmed by the vocalisation found in the Aramaic portions of the Old Testament, e.g., אֲבֹתֵיכֶם ‘your fathers’ (Ezra 4.15), מְדִינָתְךָ ‘your inhabitation’ (Dan. 4.22). The 2FS suffix, too, is attested in Egyptian Aramaic, where occurrences with the spelling *-ky* significantly outnumber examples spelled *-k*. Whereas the first orthography is taken as reflecting *-ekī*, it is not certain whether the second also reflects *-ek* or is *scriptio defectiva* for *-ekī* (Cook 1990, 60; Muraoka and Porten 2003, 46–49). There is one example of *-yky* (זִילִיכִי ‘yours’; Muraoka and Porten 2003, 55–56), which, *prima facie*, reflects *-īkī*.

⁴ These are the same scholars who argue for the possibility of a long vowel in Proto-Aramaic. See fn. 3, above.

2.2. Middle Aramaic

The predominant 2MS form in all corpora is *-k*. In the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, one also finds some examples of the suffix with the orthography *-kh*, whose spelling reflects *-kā* and is probably a Hebraism (Fassberg 1992), in the light of the exceedingly frequent orthography *-kh* of the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls. Beyer (1984, 424), Cook (1990, 60) and Qimron (1992), however, consider the suffix to be a reflex of a Proto-Aramaic *-kā*.

The 2FS suffix is represented by four different orthographies in Middle Aramaic sources: (1) *-ky* (Qumran, Naḥal Ḥever, Wadi Murabbaʿat); (2) *-yky* (Qumran); (3) *-yk* (Wadi Murabbaʿat, Targums Onqelos and Jonathan); (4) *-k* (Naḥal Ḥever, Palmyrene).

There are no attestations of the 2FS suffix in Hatran or in Nabatean. The variety of forms could be interpreted as reflecting four different realisations: *-yky* (*-ekī*), *-k* (*-ek*), *-yky* (*-īkī*), and *-yk* (*-īk*). One can, also interpret the orthographies with final *yod* as historical spellings, or, alternatively, the orthographies without *yod* as defective spellings of final vowels.⁵ Vocalised evidence of *-īk* (כִּי) comes from Babylonian and Tiberian pointed manuscripts of Targums Onqelos and Jonathan.

Corroboration of the Aramaic pronouns *-āk* and *-īk* can be found in contemporaneous Hebrew corpora. Ben-Ḥayyim (1954, 22–39, 50–52) attributed to Aramaic influence the suffix *-āk* in the Secunda, non-biblical Hebrew texts pointed with Babylonian and Palestinian vowel signs, and the oral Samaritan Pentateuchal tradition. Similarly, Kutscher (1963, 261–63) considered both

⁵ For a discussion of the orthographies, see Fassberg (1996).

the MS *-āḵ* and the FS *-īḵ* in reliable manuscripts of Tannaitic Hebrew to be the result of close contact with Aramaic.

2.3. Late Aramaic

2.3.1. Late Western Aramaic

Direct reflexes of older *-āḵ* and *-īḵ* are attested in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (ܐܝܚܐ; ܐܝܚܐ-) ⁶ and Samaritan Aramaic (MS *-āḵ* in the oral recitation and ܐ- in the written tradition; FS ܐ- in the written tradition) (Tal 2013, 37). ⁷ In Christian Palestinian Aramaic one finds *-k* (*-āḵ*?) for the 2MS; the orthography of the 2FS *-(y)ky* looks like a reflex of older *-ekī* (Bar-Asher 1977, 326; Müller-Kessler 1991, 69, 129; Fassberg 1996, 14 fn. 26).

2.3.2. Late Eastern Aramaic

Direct reflexes of older 2MS *-āḵ* and 2FS *-īḵ* are also attested in the East in Classical Mandaic (M *-[ʔ]k*, F *-[y]k*) (Nöldeke 1875, §76) and in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (M *-k*, F *-yk*) (Epstein 1960, 122). In the latter, the vocalisation of MS Sasson, an early eastern manuscript of the Geonic legal compendium *Halakhot Pesuqot*

⁶ In the Palestinian Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza, one finds *pataḥ* in the suffix more often than *qameṣ*, which indicates that **ā* and **a* had merged, yielding a Sefardi-like pronunciation of the vowel. See Fassberg (1990, 11; 1996, 13–14). For the Geniza fragments of the Palestinian Talmud, which are unvocalised (ܐ-), see Heijmans (2005, 36–37).

⁷ There are no examples of the FS suffix in recited Samaritan Aramaic *piyyuṭim*.

(הלכות פסוקות), points to the realisations *-aḳ* and *-i/i̇ḳ* (see Morgenstern 2011, 197–98).⁸

The Classical Syriac MS form *-āḳ* is a retention from earlier Aramaic. The consonantal skeleton of the FS form points to *-eḳi*, whereas the vocalisation is *-eḳ* (Nöldeke 1880, §§50, 65).

3.0. Neo-Aramaic

3.1. Western Neo-Aramaic

The Western Neo-Aramaic dialects of Maṭlula, Baxʿa, and Jubbʿadin show reflexes of the earlier Aramaic suffixes *-āḳ* and *-e/i̇ḳ*: MS *-ax* and FS *-iṣ* (Arnold 1990, 43).⁹

3.2. Neo-Mandaic

Neo-Mandaic, too, has preserved the suffixes of older Aramaic: MS *-aḳ*, FS *-eḳ* (Häberl 2009, 157).

3.3. Central Neo-Aramaic

In Central Neo-Aramaic the 2MS suffix is derived from the older suffix *-āḳ*, but the vowel of the suffix has shifted to *o/u* as a result of the ‘Canaanite shift’ *ā > o* (Jastrow 2011, 699): Mlaḥsô *-ox*, Ṭuroyo *-ūx*. The 2FS *-ex* in Mlaḥsô is descended from the earlier Aramaic *-e/i̇ḳ*; in Ṭuroyo, however, one hears *-ax*, as in NENA.

⁸ There is debate as to whether **a* and **ā* have merged in this dialect. For bibliography and discussion, see Morgenstern (2011, 20–23).

⁹ The shortening of the vowels of *-āḳ* and *-e/i̇ḳ* to *-ax* and *-iṣ* is a function of the retraction of stress.

3.4. NENA

The 2MS form in NENA dialects is *-o/ux* (Hertevin *-oh*), similar to Central Neo-Aramaic. The 2FS suffix is *-ax* (Hertevin *-ah*). Neither of these suffixes is derived directly from the earlier Aramaic forms.¹⁰

3.4.1. 2MS *-o/ux*

Though one might be tempted at first blush to see the form *-o/ux* in NENA as the result of contact with Central Neo-Aramaic dialects, there is no general shift of $\bar{a} > o$ in NENA, as there is in Central Neo-Aramaic, and for that reason a different process probably was responsible.

Nöldeke (1875, §37) was the first to explain the origin of the 2MS *o/u*-vowel. He posited an ad hoc shift of $\bar{a} > o$, reconstructing the stages $*-ay-k > *-\bar{a}-k > -o/ux$, comparing the NENA form to the suffix $-\bar{a}x$ on singular and plural nouns in Targumic Aramaic.¹¹ Moreover, he related it to the initial vowel of the Urmi 2PL *-oxun*, which he derived in a similar manner: $*-ay-xun > *-\bar{a}-xun > -oxun$. Hoberman (1988, 571), expressed uneasiness

¹⁰ For an extensive analysis and discussion of the pronouns in NENA, see Hoberman (1988).

¹¹ I.e., Targums Onqelos and Jonathan. See Nöldeke (1868, §37). One should also note (as did Nöldeke in 1875, §141) the identical form in Biblical Aramaic on singular nouns (ܐܬܝܢ) and on plural nouns $-\bar{a}k$ (*qere*; ܕܝܢ *ktiv*). Nöldeke also compared the 2PL suffix to the Samaritan Aramaic 2MPL suffix *-wəḥon*, e.g., *לְוֹכֹן* ‘to you (MPL)’, *מִנּוֹכֹן* ‘from you (MPL)’, *לְחִמּוֹכֹן* ‘your (MPL) bread’.

with Nöldeke's explanation for *-o/ux*, but was unable to improve upon it.

I wish to propose a different origin for the vowel of the 2MS *-o/ux*. Nöldeke's suggestion of a shift $\bar{a} > o$ is problematic, since \bar{a} does not shift to *o* elsewhere in NENA. On the other hand, I think Nöldeke was correct in connecting NENA *-ox* (2MS) to *-oxun* (2PL) in the light of the fact that, as he noted for the previous stage of Eastern Aramaic (viz., Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Classical Mandaic), the distinction between the series of pronouns on singular nouns and the series on plural nouns was neutralised and the two series could be added willy-nilly to singular or plural nouns.

I suggest that what happened in Proto-NENA paralleled what took place in pronominal suffixes on plural nouns in Western Neo-Aramaic, where the vowel *o*, perhaps originally from the older Aramaic 3MS *-ohī* on plural nouns,¹² was reanalysed as the connecting vowel on plural nouns before genitive pronouns (i.e., *-o- + -hī*) (Fassberg 1990, 118–19). The vowel *o* was subsequently levelled throughout the paradigm and pronominal suffixes were added to it anew, e.g., Ma'lula 3MS *tar^c-ō-ye* 'his doors', 3FS *tar^c-ō-ya*, 2MS *tar^c-ō-x*, 2FS *tar^c-ō-š*, 1F *tar^c-ō-y(i)*.¹³ If this reconstruction is correct, then one sees in NENA a nascent stage of the levelling of *o*, which began because of the metanalysis of the

¹² Hoberman (1988, 563, 569) derives NENA *-oxun* from *-awxun/ayxun*.

¹³ For the inflection in the different Western Neo-Aramaic dialects, see Arnold (1990, 305).

3MS *-ohī*. In NENA it spread to the 2MS (*-ox*) and 2PL (*-oxun*) suffixes, and, in the *lishana deni* dialects of Jewish Zakho and Jewish Amedia, even to the 3PL *-ohun*.

My reconstruction depends on the assumption that *-ohī* < **-awhu* < **-ayhu* (Garr 1985, 106–9) took place already in Proto-Aramaic and was an inherited feature of both Western and Eastern Aramaic—it is attested in Old, Official, Middle, and Late Aramaic (both Western and Eastern [Syriac and Jewish Babylonian¹⁴]). This is the assumption of Nöldeke (1875, §§141, 144), who saw *-yh* on plural nouns as transferred from the original Aramaic pronoun on singular nouns (*-eh*). Boyarin (1981, 615–18), on the other hand, has argued that the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Classical Mandaic form *-(y)h* reflects *-eh* < **-ayhi*.¹⁵ Hoberman (1988, 570; following a suggestion of Kaufman) has also proposed that the 3MS NENA form was derived from **-ayhu* and not from *-ohī* < **-awhu*.

¹⁴ Nöldeke (1875, §144) notes that *-ohi* is attested, but less frequently than *-eh*. He points out only one reflex of *-ohi* in Classical Mandaic: ܥܕܝ ‘his hands’.

¹⁵ He also points out that it is found in Samalian and in the Uruk incantation text. For bibliography and older explanations of the form, see Boyarin (1981, 616 fn. 3). A full treatment of the 3MS suffix on plural nouns in Northwest Semitic can be found in Garr (1985, 106–9). It is noteworthy that both the common Aramaic (ܐܝܗܝ-) and Biblical Hebrew (אִי-) forms diverge from the expected shift of **-ayhu* > *-ehu* in the two languages. Cross (2003) viewed the suffixes in Aramaic and Hebrew as forms with an old Semitic plural ending *-aw*.

3.3.1. 2FS *-ax*

As in the case of the 2MS *-o/ux*, the confusion and mixing of suffixes in Late Eastern Aramaic led Nöldeke (1875, §37) to explain NENA FS *-ax* as a reflex of the older Aramaic 2FS suffix on plural nouns: **-ayki* > *-ayk* > *-āk*. It should be stressed, however, that in Targums Onqelos and Jonathan, Syriac, and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, the 2FS suffix was realised with a short *a*-vowel (*-ak*), as is the case in NENA. According to Garr (1991), monophthongisation in Babylonian Aramaic took place in originally medial, open syllables. In the light of the shift $\varepsilon > a$ in Babylonian Aramaic and Hebrew, the monophthongisation of **ay* may have developed along the lines of **ay* > ε > *a* (Brockelmann 1908, 192; Garr 1991, 718).¹⁶

Yet, another scenario is also possible. One may derive *-ax* in those dialects originating in Babylonia as developing from the original **-ik* added to singular nouns, in which case *-ek* > *-ak* already in Late Eastern Aramaic, the forerunner of NENA. If so, perhaps the shift began in Babylonia and from there spread to adjacent NENA-speaking areas.

¹⁶ As noted already by Nöldeke (1868, XXXV–XXXVII), Neo-Aramaic on the whole shows more of an affinity to Jewish Babylonian Aramaic than to Classical Syriac. For a more recent investigation of the subject, see Fox (2008).

4.0. Conclusion

The 2MS and 2FS genitive pronominal suffixes show continuity and change during the long course of Aramaic. Western Neo-Aramaic and Neo-Mandaic preserve the older Aramaic suffixes. NENA innovated new suffixes, and Central Neo-Aramaic, true to its name, preserves one suffix, but innovated the other.

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BEING BORN IN NEO-ARAMAIC*

Samuel Fox

1.0. Being Born in English

The English expression ‘to be born’ is the passive form of the verb ‘to bear’, which has a general meaning ‘to carry’ and a special sense ‘to give birth to’. The use of the passive of the verb ‘to bear’ in this meaning is very old in the Germanic languages and can already be found in Gothic.¹ However, the connection between ‘to bear’ and ‘to be born’ is nowadays hardly felt in English and the Oxford English Dictionary (1971, 1003) remarks that “the phrase *to be born* has become virtually an intransitive verb.” The result is that ‘to be born’ now usually refers specifically to emerging from the womb and is no longer a special sense of a more general verb. In more formal style, the passive can still refer to carrying, but when it has this sense, an alternate form spelled with a final *-e* is now used to distinguish it from the more usual meaning.

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¹ An example is found in Wulfilas’s translation of the Bible in Luke 1.35.

On the other hand, ‘to be born’ is frequently used in a metaphorical sense, and from its basic meaning it has been generalised to all kinds of beginnings. We can say ‘a star is born’, whether we are speaking of a celestial object or of a popular performer, and we can speak of the ‘births’ of more abstract entities, such as a nation or an idea.

2.0. Older Semitic

Like English, the older Semitic languages express ‘to be born’ by using passive forms of a verb whose active means ‘to give birth’. The triliteral root of this Semitic verb is *wld*. Unlike its English counterpart, however, the Semitic verb does not also mean ‘to carry’, but refers specifically to birth. The forms in the various Semitic languages are clearly cognate. For example, in Akkadian we have *naludu* ‘be born, created, to be begotten’, the N stem of *alādu* ‘bear’, Arabic uses *wulida*, the vocalic passive of *walada*, Hebrew uses *nōlaḏ*, the *nifʿal* of *yālaḏ*, and Geʿez has *tawalda*, the passive of *walada* ‘bear’.

3.0. Middle Aramaic

A verb meaning ‘to be born’ is not attested in Biblical Aramaic, but in Syriac we find forms with the root *yld* which correspond to those which are found elsewhere in Semitic: *peʿal ileḏ* ‘bear’, and its corresponding *eṭpeʿel*, *eṭiled* ‘be born’.² Similar forms are also found in the other Middle Aramaic dialects. In JBA we have

² Examples are found in Luke 2:1 and in the Life of Saint Ephraem, included in Brockelmann 1938: 23*.

pe'al ילד 'give birth' and its *etpe'el* אתילד 'be born' (Sokoloff 2002, 534–35). In Mandaic the *pe'al* of this verb has undergone metathesis, so we have *iadlat* 'she brought forth' (Drower and Macuch 1963, 189), but the *etpe'el* retains the original sequence of consonants: *'tlid* 'was born' (Drower and Macuch 1963, 192).

In Syriac *eṭlēḏ* is the only word specifically meaning 'be born'. However, alongside forms of *yld*, JBA and Mandaic both have a second way of expressing this: they use forms of the root *hwy*, whose basic meaning is 'be' or 'become'. In Mandaic we have the *pe'al* *hua lmh* 'be born', literally 'come to be to his mother,' and the *etpe'el* in the phrase *bnia nihiulh mithuilh minh* 'he will have children born to him by her' (Drower and Macuch 1963, 134). For JBA Sokoloff (2002, 370) gives the examples אנא בחד בשבא הוא 'I was born on Sunday' and האי מאן דשבתא יהא בשבתא ימות 'one who will be born on the Sabbath will die on the Sabbath'.

So, the use of the verb 'to be' to express the idea of being born is first attested in JBA and Mandaic, where it exists alongside reflexes of *yld*. But over time, this new expression and variations on it have supplanted derivatives of *yld* in all the Central and Eastern dialects of Aramaic. We will survey this territory from East to West, beginning in Tur Abdin and ending in southwestern Iran, and show how 'to be born' is expressed in a number of dialects which are both representative and well-documented.

4.0. Turoyo

Turoyo was traditionally spoken in the district of Tur Abdin around the town of Midyat, in the present-day Turkish provinces

of Mardin and Şırnak. Most Turoyo speakers have emigrated, mainly to Europe, but a minority remain in their traditional territory.

Ritter's (1990) grammar gives several different ways of saying 'to be born'. First, and most commonly, the verb *hawî* (root *hwy*), whose basic meaning is 'become, occur', has a specific use as 'be born.'

- (1) *hawîno bî-şâto dänn-älfo tmônê mō tartê u tiş'î*
 'I was born in the year 1898.' (Ritter 1990, 46)

Second, the verb *hule* 'give' can be used with the subject *aloho* 'God' to mean 'be born', literally 'God gave'.

- (2) *lālōho hûle-li*
 'I was born' lit. 'God gave me.' (Ritter 1990, 591–92)³
- (3) *d-ālōho hîwîle*
 'That they were born' lit. 'that God gave them.' (Ritter 1990, 594)

A third way of saying 'to be born' is the I-stem passive verb *xliq* 'be created', which is a borrowing from Arabic *xalaqa*:

- (4) *xliq a'ma z'ûro*
 'A son was born to her.' (Ritter 1990, 126)

And one last form is a II-stem passive verb: *mawlid*, a borrowing of Kurdish *welidîn*.

³ The initial *l* of *lālōho* marks it as the subject of a preterite verb. This use of *l-* is found only in Turoyo, and even there it is optional. (Ritter 1990, 65, Coghill 2016, 87–90). In marking nouns for their syntactic function, Turoyo is like Kurdish, where the subject of a preterite verb is in the oblique case.

(5) *di-mwālid*

‘that he was born’ (Ritter 1990, 172)

5.0. NENA

Moving to the East, we enter the territory in which dialects of North-East Neo-Aramaic (NENA) are or were spoken. Many of these dialects have disappeared in the last hundred and twenty years. The speakers of some of them were all killed during World War I, while others disappeared when their speakers fled or migrated voluntarily and abandoned their ancestral language in their new surroundings. For those varieties of NENA which have survived long enough to be documented, we do not always have information about the expressions for ‘to be born’, but we do have enough information to understand the general picture.

The westernmost of the documented NENA dialects are those of the district of Bohtan: Hertevin, and the village cluster of Ruma, Shwata, and Borb. In Hertevin ‘to be born’ is expressed with the verb *hwy* (3MS present *hawe*, 3MS preterite *hwele*), which also means ‘become, occur’ (Jastrow 1988, 211).

(6) *hwēlela ḥa saxla*

‘A child was born to her.’

Just to the northeast of Hertevin in the dialects of Ruma, Shwata, and Borb, ‘to be born’ was expressed by the verb *hiwoya* ‘become’ (3MS present *yowe*, 3MS preterite *(w)hele*) (Fox 2009, 147).

(7) *duwi bobi wha gowāt osmallu*

‘My father (and) mother were born in the Ottoman Empire.’

(Fox 2009, 65)

About 70km south of the Bohtan dialects we find the town of Zakho, where the Jews spoke a dialect which has been extensively documented by Yona Sabar (2002). The towns of other settlements in the vicinity, including Dohok, Amədyā, and Nerwa, spoke very similar dialects, and Sabar includes them all in his *Dictionary*. In these dialects there are two verbs ‘to be born’. As in the other dialects we have seen, one is *hwy*, whose primary meaning is ‘be’ or ‘become’. The second one, which we see here for the first time, is *bry*, which also means ‘happen’. The two appear together as synonyms in the sentence *la hōyanwa ula bar-yanwa* ‘(I wish) I (F) had not been born at all’ (Sabar 2002, 149). That a verb meaning ‘to be created’ should come to mean ‘to be born’ is not surprising, but what is surprising is that the form of the Zakho verb corresponds to the JBA *peʿal* ברי ‘create’, while its meaning corresponds to that verb’s passive, the *etpeʿel* איברי ‘be created’, which has no other descendant in Zakho. The passive *binyanim*, the *etpeʿel*, *etpaʿal*, and *ettaḡʿal* have been lost entirely in NENA, and their place is normally taken by periphrastic expressions. However, in this case the descendant of the *peʿal* verb itself has acquired a passive meaning.

About 55km southeast of Zakho is Alqosh, a large village in the Mosul plain, which was long a major centre of Aramaic-speaking Christians. In the dialect of Alqosh, both *hwy* ‘to be’ and *bry* ‘to happen’ are used for ‘to be born:’

- (8) ʔu dāha mmāḥkex le-ʿmāḏa» d-yāla de-gbāre, ʾaw yāle d-khāwε:

‘And now we’ll speak about the baptism of a child which is born, or children which are born.’ (Coghill 2003, 355)

When *hwy* means ‘be born’ it behaves entirely regularly. However, when the verb means ‘be’, if it follows a prefix, it is irregular, in that it both elides its initial *h* and causes devoicing of the prefix: so ‘he will be born’ is the regular *bedhāwe*, but ‘you will be (MS)’ is the irregular *ptāwet*. This is entirely to be expected, as ‘to be’ is very frequent and so is likely to suffer erosion, while the less common use of the verb behaves regularly.

To the north of Alqosh and the other villages of the Mosul plain is the district of Barwar, whose dialect was very thoroughly documented by Geoffrey Khan (2008). Barwar, like Jewish Zakho and Alqosh, uses both *hwy* and *bry* to express ‘to be born’:

- (9) *’u-bréle dīya b-xšāwən biz-zāwda mən-’əččā-mma ’ālpā nāše*
 ‘By now there have been born, I think, more than nine-hundred thousand people.’ (Khan 2008a, 651)
- (10) *b-ay-dāna lānwa wíθa*
 ‘At that time, I was not born.’ (Khan 2008a, 702)

The root *yld* does survive in Barwar as the metathesised *yǝl*, which is used only in the active form meaning ‘give birth’, and only with reference to animals.

North and east of Barwar was Ashitha, the largest village of the tribal district of Tiyyari. Although Borghero (2005) mentions only *hwy* with the meaning of ‘be born’, e.g., *hweli* ‘I was born’ (Borghero 2006, 161), she also notes that the causative of *bry* means ‘give birth’ (Borghero 2006, 150), so it is plausible that *bry* would also be used for ‘be born’.

Continuing to the northeast, we come to the tribal district of Jilu in the present-day Turkish province of Hakkari. I heard only Newton Chirkina, probably the most conservative witness to

this dialect, use (h)wy to mean ‘be born’, e.g., *wiyena* ‘I was born’ (Fox 1997, 39). On the other hand, the consultants of Fox (2018) use *bry*: *brali* ‘I was born’ (Fox 2018, 210), which may be either an alternate traditional Jilu form or a borrowing from other dialects.

East of Hakkari is the plain of Urmi in Iranian Azerbaijan, which is the home of a diminished, but still-important community of Christian speakers of NENA. Khan (2016) has very thoroughly documented their dialect, which is the basis of modern literary Assyrian. Both *hvy* and *bry*, which also means ‘create’, are attested here:

- (11) ’á +*kəṭma-b-rīšu*| *mxiḷə b-cīṣət bəxti*| *bāxti yálo vílə ʃu-
+xiyàvand*.|

‘This accursed man hit my wife’s stomach and my wife’s baby was born in the street.’ (Khan 2016, 4:64)

- (12) *zarúzələ Xàva*| *mára Xàva*| ’átən *brilax*| ’u-*mánnax +plátłun
nəšə*.|

‘He makes (an image of) Eve, he says ‘Eve, you were born and from you people issued.’ (Khan 2016, 4:92)

Just as in Barwar, *yld* survives in use in Christian Urmi, but only in its active form ‘give birth’ and only for animals. The verb has undergone metathesis: present *yadla* rather than **yalda* and preterite *dəlla* rather than **yləlla*.

- (13) +*há sústi dəlla*!|

‘Oh, my mare has given birth!’ (Khan 2016, 4:122)

In the town of Urmi there was also a Jewish community. Throughout the NENA area, where a Jewish community existed

in the same town as a Christian community, the dialects which they spoke were different. In the case of Urmi, the difference between the two forms of NENA was very considerable.

Jewish Urmi belongs to a group of dialects which Mutzafi (2008) has named Trans-Zab Jewish Neo-Aramaic. This group is distinguished from the rest of NENA by a number of characteristics. Among these is the verb *xdr* (Mutzafi 2008, 426), which is used to mean ‘become’ in place of *hwy*, which we have seen everywhere else. Like *hwy* in other forms of Neo-Aramaic, *xdr* is also used for ‘be born’. It also appears in an expanded form with *+m-daa* ‘from (my) mother’:

(14) *ana g-Urmi xdiren, ana g-Urmi ++m-daa xdiren*

‘I was born in Urmi.’ (Khan 2008b, 472)

In the texts in Khan 2008b, one also finds *Ødy* ‘come’ used to mean ‘to be born’:

(15) *broná-š gdèwa*

‘If a son was born.’ (Khan 2008b, 422)

The root *yld*, metathesised as *ydl*, survives in the active form ‘give birth’. Here it is not restricted to animals:

(16) *baá bratà ydàlta*

‘Why has she given birth to a daughter?’ (Khan 2008b, 422)

Far to the south of Urmi, in Iraq, close to the Iranian border, are the towns of Sulemaniyya and Halabja. The dialects that were spoken by the Jews who lived in those places also belong to Mutzafi’s Trans-Zab group. Again, the verb *xdr* means both ‘become’ and ‘be born’. There were also two extended phrases incorporating *xdr* used in this meaning: *payda xdr* (Khan 2004,

593) and *min dakí xdr. Payda* is a Kurdish loanword used in the corresponding phrase in that language, and *min daki* means ‘from my mother’.

(17) *bróna xădírwā*

‘When a boy was born’ (Khan 2004, 464)

(18) *min daki xirena*

‘I was born’⁴

6.0. Neo-Mandaic

We now come to our last and easternmost stop, Modern Mandaic, which does not belong to the NENA group, and differs very substantially from it.⁵ Like NENA, Modern Mandaic can express ‘to be born’ by using the verb meaning ‘to become’, though here the lexeme is *tmm*, which does not appear in NENA in this sense.

(19) *gow ahváz tammit*

‘I was born in Ahvaz.’

(20) *gow artíwel ətít gow šit 1935*

‘I was born (lit. into the world I came) in the year 1935.’

⁴ From my notes. The speaker was from Halabja.

⁵ See Fox (1994). Data on Modern Mandaic are from Hezy Mutzafi (p.c.).

7.0. Summary

Now that we have surveyed the modern dialects, we can summarise the ways in which they express ‘be born’ in the following table:

Dialect	become	become from mother	God gives	come	come into the world	be created	loan word
Turoyo	X		X			X	<i>mwālid</i>
Hertevin	X						
Bohtan	X						
J. Zakho	X					X	
Alqosh	X					X	
Barwar	X					X	
Ashitha	X					X?	
Jilu	X					X?	
C. Urmi	X					X	
J. Urmi	X	X		X			
Suleimaniyya	X	X					<i>payda xdr</i>
Mandaic	X				X		

We have noted that, in a few cases, the inherited Semitic root *ylđ* has survived in its active form ‘give birth’, but the passive form of the stem has vanished from Neo-Aramaic. Every form of (Central and Eastern) Neo-Aramaic expresses ‘be born’ with a word which means ‘become’, though the specific lexemes vary: from Turoyo through Christian Urmi it is *hwy/hvy*, but in Jewish Trans-Zab it is *xdr*, and in Mandaic it is *tmm*. There are also alternative expressions in most dialects.

In most dialects, the I-stem verb based on the root *ylđ* meaning ‘give birth’ has been lost or is not used with reference to humans. At the same time, no dialect uses a verb from that root to mean ‘be born’ and so the lexical connection between verbs with the two meanings which is found in other forms of

Semitic has been broken. However, some Neo-Aramaic dialects have recreated such a connection by using the causative forms of *hwy* and *bry* to mean ‘give birth’. So, for example, I-stem *hweli* (Coghill 2003, 166) means ‘I was born’ and the III-stem *muhwela* (Coghill 2003, 160) means ‘she gave birth’. Note that the original relationship between the two verbs, for example Syriac *iled* ‘bear’ and *eṭiled* ‘be born’, made *giving birth* the basic action and *being born* the derived passive. But the recreated relationship is between a basic process of *being born* and a derived causative meaning *cause to be born*, that is *giving birth*.

While Neo-Aramaic has recreated a tie between the two actions, and the relationship is transparent, in English the relationship has become rather opaque. We usually say, ‘she had a baby’ rather than the more formal ‘she gave birth’. And even the latter, which is historically related to ‘be born’, is different enough that the connection is not entirely obvious.

Another important point is that the published documentation for many dialects of Neo-Aramaic is incomplete and does not tell us how ‘to be born’ is expressed. For that reason, many dialects were not included in this survey. Further, where an equivalent for ‘to be born’ is documented, we cannot be sure that there are no other expressions in use. Khan’s descriptions of Barwar and Christian Urmi include enough material that we may hope that no other way of saying ‘to be born’ has been missed, but they are exceptions. For example, though I recorded only *hwy* in this sense in Bohtan, it would not surprise me to find that *bry* was also possible.

As we have seen, *hwy* ‘become’ already existed alongside *yld* in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Classical Mandaic, but there is no obvious reason why the two should not have both survived together, at least in some forms of Neo-Aramaic. The explanation must surely be found in the influence of other languages, in particular Kurdish. It has long been understood that Kurdish has had a profound influence on every aspect of Neo-Aramaic (Khan 2008, 18–24 and Kapeliuk 2011). The lexicon has experienced especially strong influence, both through borrowing and through calques. The various forms ‘to be born’ takes can be readily understood as due to the influence of Kurdish.

Here are the various expressions for ‘to be born’ in Kurmanji, as given in Chyet (2003, 716):

<i>çêbûn</i>	‘be made, come into being (lit. be good)’
<i>hatin dinyaê</i>	‘come to the world’
<i>ji dayk bûn</i>	‘come into being from mother’
<i>xwedê dan</i>	‘be given by God’
<i>p’eyda bûn</i>	‘appear, become visible’
<i>welidîn</i>	‘be born’ (Arabic borrowing)
<i>zayîn</i>	‘be born’

And here are the corresponding expressions in Sorani, taken from Blau (1980) and Wahbi and Edmonds (1966):

<i>bûn</i>	‘become, come into being’
<i>le dayk bûn</i>	‘come into being from mother’
<i>lê bûn</i>	‘become, come into being’
<i>zayîn</i>	‘be born’

Of the dialects we have surveyed, only Suleimaniyya/Halabja is in the Sorani-speaking region. The rest of the dialects and Turoyo are or were spoken in areas where Kurmanji is the majority language.

The dominant Neo-Aramaic expressions for ‘be born’ are ‘become’ (*hwy* and its equivalents *xdr* and *tmm*) and ‘be created’ *bry*, and these can both be understood as calques of Kurmanji *çêbûn* or *p’eyda bûn* and Sorani *bûn/lê bûn*.⁶

The forms meaning ‘come to be from mother’, which we have seen in Jewish Urmi and Halabja, are equivalents of Kurmanji *ji dayk bûn* and Sorani *le dayk bûn*. In fact, the words for ‘mother’ in Jewish Urmi (+*daa*) and in Halabja (*daka*) are borrowings. So, again, not just the underlying meaning, but also part of the form is borrowed from Kurdish.

Two further expressions which we have seen only in Turoyo are also of Kurmanji origin: *l-aloho hule* ‘God gave’ is a translation of *Xwedê dan*, and *mwalid* is a borrowing of *welidîn*.

Support for the idea that the use of words meaning ‘become’ is the result of contact with Kurdish comes from the Arabic dialect of Tillo (Lahdo 2009). Tillo belongs to the Anatolian group of *qeltu* dialects and is spoken in a village on the outskirts of Siirt, less than 50km East of Hertevin, in a Kurdish-speaking area. Most other modern Arabic dialects either use a passive form

⁶ In Suleimaniyya we also have *payda xdr*, where not only the underlying meaning, but part of the form has been borrowed from Kurdish.

of the inherited root *wld* to express ‘be born’, or else have substituted *xlq*, whose basic meaning is ‘create’:⁷

(21a) *intə win ʾinwiladit* Iraqi Arabic (Maamouri 2013)

(21b) *fayn xla:qiti* Moroccan Arabic (Maamouri 2018)

‘Where were you born?’

In Tillo final devoicing has changed *walad* into *walat*, and it is still in use, but the only sentence with ‘be born’ which Lahdo cites actually uses *ṣār*, whose basic meaning is ‘become’:

(22) *ənt fī-Təllo kəṣ-ṣərt mää-ēke?*

‘you were born in Tillo, isn’t that so?’

So it seems Tillo Arabic, like Neo-Aramaic, has to some extent substituted a calque on Kurdish for its inherited word for ‘be born’. Behnstedt and Woidich (2016, 401) also mention that *ṣyr* is used in this meaning in two other places in the same area: in Urfa and in the dialect of Kinderib, documented by Otto Jastrow (2003, 174–75).

(23) *ənnawb awwal mā yṣēr farxa*

‘Then as soon as her young is born.’

The fact that this usage is found in several places, all of them in the predominantly Kurdish-speaking area, reinforces the likelihood of its being due to Kurdish influence.

⁷ Behnstedt and Woidich (2016, 398–401) show the distribution of these and other expressions for ‘be born’ across the Arabic-speaking world.

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NOT SUCH A DUMMY OR OTIOSE AFTER ALL: NENA VERBS WITH NON-REFERENTIAL 3FS OBJECT PRONOUNS

Alessandro Mengozzi

In the first description of NENA employing the instruments of modern structural linguistics, Garbell (1965, 76) observed that in the Jewish dialects of northern Persian Azerbaijan “the verbs j-r-q ‘run’ and k-x-k ‘laugh’ generally take a redundant objection [*sic*] suffix of the 3rd p. sg. f.” Since then, this phenomenon has been described in a number of Jewish NENA dialects for ‘run’, ‘laugh’ and a few other verbs.

In a text in the Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Gzira on how children used to play in the village, Nakano (1973, 40–41) translates the six occurrences of the verb *ʔrq* without a pronominal object or index ‘run’ and the only occurrence of the construction with a 3FS pronominal object ‘run away’:

- (1) *ʔbbe ʔariq -la*
he can manage.PRS -OBJ.3SGF
‘he can run away’

Hoberman (1989, 215) mentions in the verb glossary of the Jewish dialect of Amadiya that *ʔrq* ‘run’ comes to mean ‘flee’ when it

is used with an impersonal 3FSG direct object suffix. Mutzafi (2008, 83–84) describes the same semantic opposition in the Jewish dialect of Betanure, not far from Amadiya in the northern part of Iraqi Kurdistan:¹

- (2a) ʔrəq -le
 run.PRET -3MSG
 ‘he ran’
- (2b) ʔile ʔriqa
 COPULA.3MSG run.PRF.3MSG
 ‘he has run’
- (2c) ʔroq
 run.IMP.2MSG
 ‘Run!’
- (2d) ʔriq-ā -le
 run.PRET-**OBJ.3FSG** -3MSG
 ‘he fled’ lit. ‘he run it (F)’
- (2e) ʔile ʔriqa -lla
 COPULA.3MSG run.PRF.3MSG -**OBJ.3FSG**
 he has fled’ lit. ‘he has run it (F)’
- (2f) ʔruq -la
 run.IMP.2MSG -**OBJ.3FSG**
 ‘Flee!’ lit. ‘run it (F)’

Israeli (1998, 117–18) adds three verbal roots to the list of verbs that take a 3FSG object pronoun or index in all tenses and moods:

¹ Glosses and literal translations are mine. I am grateful to the editor and reviewer for their corrections and valuable suggestions.

pšx ‘be happy’, *mrt* ‘fart audibly’, *pšy* ‘fart inaudibly’.² According to her gloss, in the Jewish dialect of Saqqez, northwestern Iran, *arq* would seem to be used with a pronominal object in both meanings ‘run’ and ‘flee’. Mutzafi (2004, 103) gives a slightly different list for Jewish Koy Sanjaq, in the Erbil district of Iraqi Kurdistan, and specifies that these verbs “are inflected in all Tense-Mood-Aspect categories with a 3sgf object void of content”: *ʾrq* ‘run, flee (seemingly constructed in the same way with both meanings)’, *gxk* ‘laugh’, *pšx* ‘be happy’, *ʾrt* ‘break wind audibly’, *pšy* ‘break wind inaudibly’, and *qđy* ‘manage’.

(3) *ga ya māla lá-qədy -ā -lan*

In this town NEG-manage.PRET -OBJ.3FSG -1PL

‘We did not manage in this town.’

Fassberg (2010, 125) sketches the dialectal distribution of the phenomenon in a footnote, with selected bibliographical references, and lists the verbs that in the Jewish dialect of Challa, south-eastern Turkey, very close to the Iraqi border, are attested in combination with a “dummy” 3FSG pronominal object: *ʾrq* ‘flee’, *qđy* ‘spend time’, and *xdy* ‘rejoice’. The verb *qđy* usually has the intransitive meaning of ‘finish something’ and the addition of the dummy object gives it the semantic connotation of ‘spend time’:

²The semantic distinction is typical of the expressive power of spoken dialects: in Tuscan it is expressed by the nominal pair noiseless *loffa* and noisy *scoreggia*. In the same territory as many NENA varieties, Kurmanci Kurdish expresses it with the compound verbs *tir kirin* ‘to fart audibly’ and *fis kirin* ‘to fart silently’, the latter deriving from Arabic *fusā* (Chyet 2003, 198).

- (4) *šūl-i q-qāḏ -ən -ne*
 work-POSS.1SG IND-finish.PRS -1SG -OBJ.3MSG
 ‘I finish my work’ lit. ‘my work I finish it (M)’
- (5) *qəḏy -ā -lu*
 finish. PRET -OBJ.3FSG -3PL
 ‘they passed the time’ lit. ‘they finished it (F)’

Fassberg then discusses less clear examples of dummy objects used with the verbal roots *mxy* in the basic stem ‘strike, hit’ and *ɾpy* ‘be loose’ in the causative stem ‘loosen, release, attack’:

- (6) *məxy -ā -la ʾell-i*
 hit. PRET- OBJ.3FSG -3FSG OBJ-1SG
 ‘She hit me’ lit. ‘she hit it (F) me’
- (7) *ʾanna nāše mɾpy -ā -lu*
 those people loosen.PRET -OBJ.3FSG -3PL
ʾəlləd ʾAwṛāham
 OBJ Abraham
 ‘Those people let Abraham have it’ lit. ‘those people loosened it (F) Abraham’

Cohen (2012, 142) lists a number of intransitive verbs that in the Jewish dialect of Zakho are construed as formally transitive with a 3FSG object index or pronoun. Besides *ʾriqāle* ‘he ran away’ and *ʾāriqla* ‘(that) he may run away’, he mentions:

- (8a) *štiq -ā -le*
 be_quiet.PRET -OBJ.3SGF -3SGM
 ‘he held his tongue’

- (8b) *qam gamṣī -lā*
 PRET smile.3PL -OBJ.3SGF
 ‘they smiled’
- (8c) *bıgmāṣa dīd-ā*
 smile.GERUND GEN-3SGF
 ‘smiling (of it_F)’

In the last example the 3FSG pronoun is attached as a genitive modifier, given the nominal rather than verbal nature of the gerund. Cohen (2012, 142) observes that the pronominal objects in these constructions “do not represent, nor are they referential to, any concrete substantival entity in the text,” and this makes these lexemes formally transitive, but functionally intransitive.

To the best of my knowledge, this construction has not been isolated in Iraqi Christian varieties of NENA. The only examples we find in the literature on Christian NENA are in dialects on the northwest fringe of the NENA territory, with verbs that indicate bodily functions.

In the dialect of the Assyrian Christians of Bohtan, “several verbs having to do with bodily functions take a semantically empty feminine singular object suffix: *rəṭli-la* ‘I farted audibly,’ *pəṣli-la* ‘I farted silently,’ *tənni-la* ‘I urinated’” (Fox 2009, 61).

In Iranian West Azerbaijan, the construction with a 3FSG pronominal object occurs in the Christian Neo-Aramaic dialect of Urmi (Khan 2016, 197):

- (9a) *ʿıman xmárt-ux + ʔlá ʔáhə + ʔarṭà -la*
 when jenny-your.SGM three times fart.SUBJ.3SGF -OBJ.3SGF
ʔó-yuma mètət
 that-day die.FUT.2SGM
 ‘When your jenny farts three times, on that day you will die.’

- (9b) *pəšy* *-a* *-lə*
 fart.PRET *-OBJ.3SGF* *-3SGM*
 ‘He farted (silently).’

The construction would appear to be a shared feature of Jewish NENA dialects, which was either inherited from proto-Jewish NENA or, more probably, spread across Trans-Zab and Lishana Deni dialects. We cannot rule out the possibility that its diffusion for quite a limited set of verbs, in almost idiomatic expressions, may have happened or have been favoured as part of an incipient process of koineisation in Israel, where all informants live—most of them having arrived in the 1950s. However, their occurrence in an isolated Christian dialect and in both Christian and Jewish varieties on the northeasternmost border of the NENA territory (Urmia), as well as examples such as ‘spend time’ and ‘hit’ in Jewish Challa, point to a wider phenomenon and a larger corpus of verbs. ‘Fart’, ‘flee’, and ‘be happy’ might be just the tip of an (admittedly small) iceberg, easily spotted or elicited, thanks to the research tradition on Jewish dialects that Irene Garbell initiated in the 1960s.

Not all scholars specify whether the use of a 3FSG pronominal object is mandatory for such ‘tip of the iceberg’ verbs. Garbell observes that they are generally used with a pronominal object, without further detail. Nakano (1973), Hoberman (1989), Mutzafi (2004), Fassberg (2010), and Greenblatt (2011, 82) record oppositional pairs for *ʔrɔ* and *qədy*, in which the construction with the 3FSG pronominal object has a specific semantic connotation: ‘run it (F)’ = ‘flee’ and ‘finish it (F)’ = ‘spend time’. Besides this function, the 3FSG pronominal object is variously described

as redundant (Garbell), impersonal (Hoberman), void of content (Mutzafi), and—with an American touch—a dummy object (Fassberg).

1.0. Towards an Explanation

If we look for a complete picture of the dialectal distribution of this syntactic construction, as well as an accurate analysis of its functions, we need to consult Geoffrey Khan's descriptions of Jewish NENA dialects. He typically proceeds, in this as in other domains of Neo-Aramaic dialectology, with two goals in mind: the documentation of Semitic tongues that are on the verge of extinction and the best possible understanding of the documented forms and phenomena.

Khan's work on Neo-Aramaic has taught us that the study of spoken, living Semitic languages, with the richness of their possible variation and expressive tools, may provide invaluable insights into understanding the structure and history of far more prestigious languages that are nevertheless dead and attested in closed, often silent corpora. It was precisely the high degrees of diatopic and diachronic variation, and the expressive power of colloquial languages, that allowed him to refine analytical and interpretative tools and, therefore, to improve, publication by publication, the description of their structures. Above all, the full understanding of a language—its lexicon as well as the subtlest nuances expressed by morpho-syntactic devices—is the best a linguist can offer to access and document the spiritual and material culture of communities that precariously survive in the memory of the very last few speakers: their *Weltanschauung*, religious and

political beliefs, oral history and literature, poetry and narrative techniques, social structures, contacts with neighbouring communities, rituals, labour and everyday life, technical vocabulary for fauna and flora, work instruments and technology, cooking tools, ingredients, recipes, and so on.

In the description of the Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Erbil, the construction under discussion is examined in connection with the use of the feminine gender as neuter. Using the same adverb as Garbell, Khan (1999, 207) observes that “the two intransitive verbs *ʿrq/ʾrq* ‘to flee, run’ and *ḡhk* ‘to laugh’ are generally combined with a 3fs. pronominal element” and “the verb *ʿrq/ʾrq* is sometimes attested without it”. Moreover, a 3FSG object pronoun introduced by the preposition *b-* ‘in, at, by, with (instrumental)’ gives to the intransitive verb *ʾzl* ‘go’ the connotation of ‘pass’, as said of time:

- (10) *xà yarxá lá zíl-le -bb-aw*
 a month NEG go.PRET-3MSG -by-3FSG
 ‘one month did not go by’ lit. ‘a month did not go by **it** (F)’
- (11) *rāba lá zíl-le -bb-aw*
 much NEG go.PRET-3MSG -by-3FSG
 ‘much time did not pass’

Khan adds that in these constructions “the pronominal suffixes are not referring to any entity external to the action itself.” His interpretation of the construction thus relies upon three fundamental observations: the verbs involved are intransitive, the pronominal element is non-referential, and the pronominal element is neuter-like.

Describing the verb morphology of Jewish Sulaymaniyah, Khan (2004, 107) remarks that “the verb *ʔrq* ‘to flee’ takes an otiose 3fs. pronominal object”. In the section on syntax, however, he takes a step further in the interpretation of the pronominal object, which makes it appear less otiose than it did at first sight. The intransitive verbs *ʔrq* ‘flee’, *ḡḡq* ‘laugh’, and *pṣx* ‘make merry’ regularly take a non-referential 3FSG pronominal object, which is also occasionally attached to the transitive verb *ʔwl* ‘do, make’ in idioms such as the following (Khan 2004, 239, 550):

- (12) *wil* *-á* *-lu* *qràwa*
 make.PRET -OBJ.3FSG -3PL battle.MSG
 ‘They had a battle’ lit. ‘they made **it (F)** a battle’
- (13) *kúlle* *hula’é* *wil* *-á* *-lu*
 all.3plm Jews make.PRET -OBJ.3FSG -3PL
ba *-xlulà*
 in, by, with -wedding.MSG
 ‘All the Jews celebrated like in a wedding celebration’
 lit. ‘all Jews made **it (F)** with a wedding’

“In all cases”—Khan concludes—“the purpose of the pronominal object appears to be to express an enhanced distinctness and intensity of the verbal activity. This is associated with an increase in transitivity.” In a dialect characterised by split ergativity, the non-referential pronominal object indeed triggers on the verbs *ʔrq*, *ḡḡq*, and *pṣx* the use of ergative morphology in the past tense, as is standard for transitive and intransitive verbs under certain conditions, namely (Khan 2004, 304):

1. The action has an affectee that is expressed by an object [i.e., the prototypical transitive construction].
2. The subject of the clause possesses properties of an agent, such as being the controller and instigator of the action.
3. The verb has a punctual *Aktionsart*.
4. The predicate is dynamic, expressing actions rather than non-action.

The attempt to find a place for verbs with a non-referential 3FSG pronominal object along the broad continuum between transitivity and intransitivity has paved the way for further sharpening of the focus on its function.

In the grammar of the Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Urmia, north-western Iran, Khan (2008, 241–42) rubricates the intransitive verbs that generally take a 3FSG pronoun (*yrq* ‘run’, *kxk* ‘laugh’, and *+mrt* ‘break wind’) in a section devoted to constructions with an impersonal 3FSG pronominal element.

In handling split ergativity in the Jewish dialect of Sanandaj, capital of the Kurdistan province of Iran, Khan (2008, 304–5) explicitly refers to Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) definition of transitivity as a continuum in which generally human and animate subjects with a higher degree of agency, i.e., controllers and instigators, rather than generally inanimate affectees and undergoers of an action, are more likely to appear in constructions with higher levels of transitivity. He then mentions the theoretical approaches to the distinction between transitive and intransitive constructions of Perlmutter (1978) and Tenny-Pustejovsky (2002). Transitive clauses express complex two-participant events in which causation and agency of the subject contrast with

affectedness and change of state on the part of the object. The subject of an intransitive clause, on the other hand, is the affectee of the action and the undergoer of a change of state.

According to Khan (2008, 307–8), the use of the non-referential 3FSG object pronoun and, consequently, of the ergative paradigm of the past tense, expresses the agentive/causative property of the subject of the verbs *ʔrq* ‘flee’, *gxk* ‘laugh’, and *mrt* ‘fart’. When an oppositional usage is attested, the intransitive, non-ergative paradigm of *ʔrq* expresses the affectedness of the subject: ergative *ʔrq-a-le* ‘he fled’, with the non-referential 3FSG pronoun, versus intransitive less agentive *riq* ‘he ran’. On the other hand, the choice of the intransitive *gxik* ‘he laughed’, instead of the ergative *gaxk-a-le* with 3FSG object pronoun, seems rather to depend on discourse prominence, “to express an event of laughing that is incidental to another event”: *g-áy ḥaštá gxik* ‘He laughed in the course of this job’.

2.0. A Diachronic and Typological Explanation

Somewhere between the two situation types—complex two-participant events and non- or less-complex one-participant events—are to be found the low elaboration events, in which the two participants are not fully distinguishable or even overlap, as in the prototypical reflexive construction. A context in which the verb ‘flee’ occurs in the corpus of Jewish Amadiya described and studied by Greenblatt (2011, 288–89) suggests a close relationship between the 3FSG pronominal object and the reflexive construction:

- (14) *ʾriq-* *-a-* *-li* *gyan-i...*
 flee.PRET -OBJ.3SGF -1SG soul.F-1SG
gəb-ən *ʾarq-ən* *-na* *mṭaše* *-li*
 want.PRES-1SGM flee.PRES-1SG -OBJ.3SGF hide.PRES.3SGM -OBJ.1SG
xa *duka* *mṭaš-ən* *-na* *gyan-i*
 a place.F hide.PRES-1SGM -OBJ.3SGF soul.F-1SG

‘I fled... I want to flee, to hide, I want a place to hide [so that he won’t come across me]’ lit., ‘I ran *it* (F) *myself/my soul* (F)... I want I run *it* (F) he (?) may hide me a place I hide *it* (F) *myself/my soul* (F)’.

The 3FSG object index *-a* in the past tense and the 3FSG pronominal object *-na* (< *-la*) in the present tense function as a prolepsis that cataphorically refers to the reflexive pronoun ‘myself’ when attached to both intransitive ‘flee’ (*ʾriqali gyani*)³ and transitive ‘hide’ (*mṭašanna gyani*).⁴ In the second occurrence, the present tense of the verb ‘flee’ (*ʾarqən-na*) is construed with the 3FSG object pronoun exactly as the almost immediately following ‘hide’ (*mṭašən-na*) and the two verbs may very well share the same object ‘myself’ (*gyani*) at the end of the sentence.

Like all Semitic languages, Aramaic does not have an inherited reflexive pronoun and most varieties have developed heavy

³ See also *gyanux ʾriqalux* ‘you fled’, lit. ‘yourself (F) you ran it (F)’ (Greenblatt 2011, 294–95).

⁴ Object indexing within the verbal complex by means of morphological agreement of the past base (historically a past participle) with the object or proleptic pronouns is a common strategy for differential object marking in Imperial, Late, and Modern Aramaic. See, e.g., Khan’s (1984) pioneering study and, more recently, Coghill (2016), esp. chs 5 and 6.

coding of the reflexive via grammaticalisation of the noun ‘soul’ plus genitive suffixed pronouns (Rubin 2005, 19–22). NENA dialects variously use Aramaic *noš-* or Iranian *gyān-* for this purpose and both forms are feminine. It is tempting to speculate about a possible origin of the construction with a 3FSG pronominal object from the construction with a proleptic pronoun referring to the feminine singular noun base of the reflexive pronoun. NENA data, as collected and studied by scholars who wrote their PhD dissertations under Khan’s supervision, point in this direction. The Cambridge school of Neo-Aramaic linguistics is another of the major achievements of Geoffrey Khan.

Elsewhere in the Jewish Amadiya corpus, the verb ‘flee’ occurs with a 3FSG object index without reflexive pronoun in a construction that would appear to be an elliptical—Greenblatt (2011, 82 fn. 7) says “abbreviated”—form of the reflexive construction with proleptic pronoun: *g’arqīwala m-qamu* ‘they would flee from them’ (316–17), *’riqali* ‘I fled’ (311–12). In one case, only is the 3FSG object indexed on the past tense form, while the expected “ergative” index of the subject (*-lu*) is missing (Greenblatt 2011, 4 and 82 fn. 7):

- (15) *Tre axa-wata ’riq- -a- <-lu*> gyan-u*
 two brother.PL flee.PRET -OBJ.3SGF <-SUBJ.3PL> soul.F-3PL
 ‘Two brothers fled from Persia.’ lit., ‘fled it (F) themselves/their soul (F)’

According to Kemmer’s (1993) generalisation, low elaboration events are coded by special verbal forms or constructions in languages that—like, e.g., Greek, German, most Semitic and Romance languages, but unlike English—possess specialised verb

morphology (middle voice or derived stems) and/or morphosyntactic devices (middle markers, such as the reflexive construction) to express middle voice semantics.⁵

As noted in Mengozzi (2007), NENA verbs generally or mandatorily construed with a non-referential 3FSG object pronoun fall under various middle semantic subdomains as described by Kemmer (1993):

Translational motion: ‘run’, ‘flee’

Emotion: ‘be happy’, ‘rejoice’, ‘make merry’

Emotive speech action: ‘laugh’, ‘smile’, ‘hold one’s tongue’

Body action: ‘fart’, ‘urinate’

These and a few other lexical fields are at stake in Coghill’s (2016, 90–100) treatment of Split-S/semantic alignment in Neo-Aramaic dialects which have ergative or tripartite alignment: Bodily Functions, Animal Cries, Inanimate Noise Production (‘thunder’), Human Utterances, Manner of Movement, Activities of Animate Agent (‘dance’, ‘play’, ‘work’, ...), and Other (‘glisten’, ‘shine’). Coghill classifies under these lexical fields those intransitive verbs that, in certain dialects, align in the past tense with transitives and thus index the subject as Agent of a transitive verb.

As a manner of movement verb, ‘run’ undergoes a semantic shift and comes to mean ‘flee’ in certain dialects when the subject is coded as an Agent. The agent-like coding of the subject in the past tense of verbs which take a non-referential 3FSG object index

⁵ For an insightful and updated discussion on the middle voice in both general and Indo-European linguistics, see Inglese (2020, 7–50).

is explained by Coghill (2016, 94) as morphologically conditioned. It is precisely the presence of an object index that triggers transitive coding despite the intransitive meaning of the verbs ‘flee’, ‘laugh’, and ‘fart’.⁶

In the dialects in which the object of a past tense form can be indexed either as an incorporated object in the verbal form⁷ or as a suffixed object attached to a special, innovative paradigm construed with the past tense preverb *qam-* ~ *kəm-* and the present base (*qam-našəq-la* ‘he kissed **her**’), 3FSG non-referential ob-

⁶ Coghill (2016, 100) concludes that “where the Neo-Aramaic Split-S alignment is not explicable through morphological motivation [as is, e.g., the case of the verbs with 3FSG non-referential object], it seems to be conditioned by Aktionsart: that is, PAST-L [agent-like/Ergative coding] is typically used with dynamic atelic intransitives (in some cases restricted to punctual ones).” It would be interesting to further investigate the relationship between split ergativity and middle voice semantics, especially in a language group like NENA that has completely replaced the common Semitic prefix and suffix conjugations with conjugated nominal forms—which created the morpho-syntactic environment for the emergence of a number of splits in alignment—and has also completely lost the middle-passive *et-* set of derived stems. These changes may have favoured the emergence of alternative middle markers and perhaps, in some dialects, the preservation of patient-like coding of the subject of intransitive verbs belonging to certain semantic classes.

⁷ Through special endings that originate in the nominal/participial historical nature of the base (*nšiq-a-le* ‘he kissed **her**’) and their possible combination with enclitic pronouns (in some dialects also *nšiq-ox-le* ‘he kissed **you**’).

jects normally occur in the former, archaic construction with incorporated object indexing (Noorlander 2021, 290).⁸ In the Jewish dialect of Duhok, the archaic paradigm *nšiq-a-le* is accepted by all informants, but is actually attested in the corpus almost exclusively for intransitive verbs that take a non-referential 3FSG object, e.g., *ʾārəq-a-li mən bet sēfer* ‘I ran away from school’ (Molin 2021, 196 and 436).

Noorlander (2021, 290) observes that the *nšiq-a-le* form is “by far the more common expression for object indexing of the reflexive pronoun *gyan-*,” i.e., *nšiq-a-le gyan-e* ‘he kissed himself’, lit. ‘he kissed **it (F)** **his self/soul (F)**’ in the NENA corpus investigated by Molin and him: Jewish Amadiya and Betanure, Christian Barwar, Urmi, and Marga. He, therefore, suggests that the reflexive construction “seems to be the source of the dummy 3fs. object coding, e.g. *ʾriq-a-le* ‘He fled (lit. fled it_F)’, originating in *ʾriq-a-le gyan-e li* ‘He fled himself.’”

Molin (2021) accepts Mengozzi’s (2007) proposal to see the construction with a non-referential 3FSG object as a middle marker, used with a very limited set of verbal lexemes, and proposes as a matter for further investigation a possible historical association of the *nšiq-a-le* paradigm “with reflexive objects and non-referential constituents in the middle voice construction” and the same paradigm “with referentially non-prominent objects” (Molin 2021, 211 fn. 15).

⁸Noorlander (2021, 190) mentions Jewish Zakho *qam gamšī-lā* ‘They smiled **it (F)**’ (Cohen 2012, 142) as an exception. See Mengozzi (2012) on *nšiq-a-le* as an archaic and *qam-našeq-la* as an innovative paradigm of the past tense with a pronominal object.

Dialectology, in general—intended as the synchronic and comparative description of language varieties—and, more specifically, NENA dialectology provide hints for the reconstruction of diachronic change on the basis of diatopic variation. In our case study, the construction of the verb ‘flee’ in the Jewish dialect of Amadiya synchronically documents the grammaticalisation path that probably led to the formation of the non-referential 3FSG object as a middle marker attested in various other dialects with a restricted set of intransitive verbs associated with middle voice semantics.

The peculiar Neo-Aramaic middle marker originated from a very common strategy that is crosslinguistically used to express middle voice semantics, that is the reflexive construction, by ellipsis of the reflexive pronoun—in its turn originally a FSG noun—and preservation of the 3FSG index that referred to it: *ʔriqali gyani* lit., ‘I ran myself’ > *ʔriqali* ‘I fled’. The cross-indexing of the object in past tense ‘ergative’ paradigms and the proleptic pronoun in other verb paradigms became the middle marker itself, giving rise to its alleged characterisation as an otiose or dummy element, void of content. The original reflexive construction with differential object marking explains the rather striking combination of transitive morphology and intransitive semantics.

The process did not necessarily start in the past tense, since in various dialects non-referential 3FSG objects are attested for all tenses and moods, and proleptic pronouns are available for the differential marking of objects on all kind of Aramaic verbal paradigms. The preservation of the archaic intraconjugational *nšiqa-*

le past tense paradigm for this kind of middle marker can probably be explained if we assume that the construction of the verbs ‘fart’, ‘flee’, and ‘be happy’ with a 3FSG pronominal object or index had become an idiomatic archaism before the introduction of the innovative *qam-našəq-la* paradigm. This would also explain the very rare occurrence of the 3FSG pronominal object as a middle marker with the later, innovative paradigm.

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THE CHURCH MILITANT: A MODERN WESTERN ARAMAIC ACCOUNT*

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1.0. Background

Modern Western Aramaic (MWA), or Siryōn to its speakers, is the sole surviving representative of the Western Aramaic languages. Prior to the Syrian civil war (2011–present), it was spoken in three villages in the Rif Dimashq Governorate of the Syrian Arab Republic, Maaloula (*Maʿlūla*, Arabic *Maʿlūlah*, al-Qutayfah District), *Baxʿa* (Arabic *Ṣarxah*, Yabroud District), and *Ġuppaʿōḏ* (Arabic *Jubbʿadīn*, al-Qutayfah District). Regarding the present number of speakers, there is no certain data available. Residents of Maaloula today estimate that there are fewer than three thousand speakers living within two of the villages (Maaloula and *Ġuppaʿōḏ*). More speakers formerly resided in these two villages, and in the village of *Baxʿa*, which was destroyed during the war

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and subsequently abandoned. These speakers are today distributed across a growing diaspora:¹

Location	Population (2004)	Population (2021)	Speakers (2021)	Speaker Percentage (2021) ²
Maaloula	2,762	1,700 [/7,400]	1,500 (25)	20.3% (0.3%)
Bax'a	1,405	0 [/4,500]	800 (15)	17.8% (0.3%)
Ġuppa'ōd	3,778	9,800 [/9,800]	1,200 (30)	12.2% (0.3%)
Diaspora	n/a	10,700	500 (n/a)	4.7% (n/a)

All these speakers live within larger (and growing) monolithically Arabophone populations, and consequently speak that language in addition to Siryōn. Within Maaloula, at most only a few dozen individuals have confident command of the language. Most members of the younger generations are passive or partial speakers of the language, comprehending it, but lacking active control, and they consequently prefer to communicate with one another in Arabic. Even those few remaining fluent speakers have

¹ The 2004 population estimates are courtesy of the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics. The 2021 estimates, courtesy of our primary informant, 'Abu George' Diab Mosa Bekhet, reflect then-current residents as well as former residents presently in diaspora. The latter figures are given in [square brackets]. The 2021 speaker estimates, also courtesy of Bekhet, reflect both partial and fluent speakers of the language. The latter figures are given in (round brackets).

² Bekhet (p.c., 18 May 2021).

largely failed to pass their command of the language to their children. The language was, therefore, likely already moribund at the start of the war, but the present conflict has accelerated the timetable of its demise, as many of the villagers have fled the region, and one of the three villages (*Bax'a/Şarxah*) was ruined and completely deserted because of the events described in Duntsov, Häberl, and Loesov (2022, 359–94).

1.1. Prior Research

The most extensive and recent samples of MWA comprise the four volumes published by Werner Arnold (1989–1991). These were followed by 111 short texts, which the late Aki'o Nakano collected from a speaker from *Ġuppa'ōḍ* between 1989 and 1990, which he published untranslated in 1994, and some 26 short texts (including translations from other languages) collected by Anas Abou-Ismaïl for his 2020 grammar of the dialect of *Ġuppa'ōḍ*.

Arnold's most recent contribution (2019) is a new dictionary, the first since Bergsträsser (1921 [1966]), based upon the heretofore published corpus and therefore admittedly limited by its size (at roughly 200,000–250,000 tokens). Arnold has also published a descriptive grammar (1990b), for which he furnishes information in parallel columns for all three dialects, whenever necessary. The primary focus of this grammar is the morphology of the language, and its description of phonology is limited, particularly with regard to syllable structure and suprasegmental phenomena. Even more of a desideratum is an updated description of verbal morphosyntax, after Correll's 1978 contribution, which depended upon the texts that were available to him at the

time, primarily those of Prym and Socin which Bergsträsser published (1915), the products of Bergsträsser's own field work (1919), those of Cantarino (1961), those of Reich (1937), and those of Correll himself (1969). Spitaler also employed the texts of Bergsträsser (1915; 1919) and Reich (1937) as sources for his 1938 grammar, which does not address syntax, except in a perfunctory manner. The syntax proper of MWA, therefore, remains largely undescribed. Most of Correll (1978) is dedicated to verbal morphosyntax, but 33 pages (99–132) concern clause-level syntax. Additionally, Cohen has contributed an article on verbal morphosyntax (1979), as well as 52 pages of his monograph (1984 [2003]), which address the MWA verb from a diachronic perspective. The most urgent tasks facing researchers engaged in documenting MWA are, therefore, enlarging the existing corpus and the eventual comprehensive description of the syntax, which will require a much larger corpus than that presently available.

1.2. The Present Text³

The following conversation was collected during the second field season of the HSE University Expedition to Qalamoun in April and May of 2021, on 4 May 2021 at the Šō'ra household in the village of Maaloula (see Image 1, facing page). It involves two of our informants, 'Ōbəl_Adīb' Filīp Šō'ra (Abu Adib Filip al-Sha'ir, b. 1939) and 'Ōbəl_Žaržūra' Dyāb Mōsa Bexet (Abu Jurj Dyab Mosa Bekhet, b. 1952). Both men were born in Maaloula, and at the time of this recording Ōbəl_Adīb was 82 years old, and

³ The present text may be compared with the digital audio recording available at <https://iocs.hse.ru/en/churchmilitant1>.

Ōbəl_Žaržūra was 69. Ōbəl_Žaržūra was educated in Maaloula and Damascus, where he studied law until circumstances required him to cease his studies. After completing his compulsory military service (1973–1977), he returned to Maaloula and has since lived there. Prior to his retirement, he worked as the Archaeological Sites Monitor in al-Qutayfah region for the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums.

Image 1: ‘Ōbəl_Adīb’ Filīp Šō‘ra (Abu Adib Filip al-Sha‘ir, b. 1939), 4 May 2021, Šō‘ra household, Maaloula, Syria



His interlocutor, Ōbāl Adīb, started life as a farmer in Maaloula, before migrating to Damascus, where he served as a baker in the city and its suburbs of Bloudan and al-Dumayr. In 1960, he and his brothers launched a bakery in Lebanon, where he worked until 1983. In that year, he returned to his farm in Maaloula, and has lived there ever since. In addition to Siryōn, both men are fluent in the local Qalamoun variety of Arabic, as are most of their neighbours, and literate in standard Arabic.

Ōbāl Adīb is the nephew of the late Bishop Athanase al-Chaer (1897–1993), formerly bishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Baniyas, Lebanon (1951–1984). On 18 August 1974, the Israeli police arrested the titular Melkite Greek Catholic archbishop of Caesarea (Philippi), Bishop Hilarion Capucci,⁴ and charged him with smuggling weapons into the West Bank. In response, the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Maximos V Hakim (1967–2000), dispatched Bishop Athanase and Bishop Paul Achkar (1893–1982), the latter bishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Latakia in Lebanon (1961–1981), as envoys to Israel, via the International Red Cross.

Despite the church's efforts, Bishop Capucci was eventually sentenced to twelve years in prison. He was released in 1978, after serving four years of his sentence, due to the Vatican's intervention. He remained politically active until the end of his life. In this account, Ōbāl Adīb relates the story of his uncle's visit to Bishop Capucci in prison, as well as that of the Patriarch Maximos

⁴ Bishop Hilarion Capucci (1922–2017), Arabic Hilāryūn Kābūtšī, was born Jūrj Kabūjī to a family bearing an Ottoman surname, *kapıcı* 'gate-keeper', which he later italianised.

V Hakim's visit to Maaloula, and details of his family life. The conversation between Ōbəl_Adīb and Ōbəl_Žaržūra offers the reader insights into spontaneous and unstructured interactions in MWA, which have heretofore been a rarity in its documentation.

1.3. Transcription System

A comparative chart of the traditional system of transcribing MWA phonemes, as established in Arnold (2006), and their IPA correspondents, is illustrated overleaf. Arnold (2006, 1) describes the velar consonant *k*/k as 'post-velar', but Fassberg (2019, 633) describes Arnold's *k* as only 'slightly post-velar' and renders it with a retracted *ḵ*. In the speech of our informants, this phoneme is neither post-velar nor retracted, suggesting that it has advanced to *k*. The third row of consonants consists of those with pharyngeal coarticulation, not due to the environment in which they occur, but in contrast with the homorganic phonemes that are not so coarticulated.

In addition to these phonemes, Arnold (2006, 1) identifies five marginal phonemes, ' , *d*, *g*, *ḏ*, and *ẓ* which mostly appear in loanwords from Arabic. We have indicated these within [square brackets] in the table above. The last is a voiced pharyngealised alveolar fricative, but it corresponds historically to the voiced pharyngealised interdental *ḏ*, with which it sometimes forms minimal pairs, such as (older) *ḏarfa* 'rocker churn (for making butter)' and (newer) *ẓarfa* 'envelope', both ultimately from Arabic *ḏarf* 'vessel, container' (Arnold and Behnstedt 1993, 54). In illustrating Arabic etymons, we employ the Romanisation system of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (2006, viii–

ix). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Arabic vocabulary imply Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), as reflected in Wehr (1971).

Stops and Affricates

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Voiceless	<i>p</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>c</i> ⁵	<i>k</i> ⁶			[ʔ]
Voiced	<i>b</i>			[<i>d</i>]			[<i>g</i>]			
Pharyngealized				<i>ṭ</i>						

Fricatives

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Voiceless		<i>f</i>	<i>t̪</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
Voiced			<i>d̪</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ž</i>		<i>ġ</i>		ʕ	
Pharyngealized			[<i>d̪ʕ</i>]	<i>ṣ</i>						
				[<i>z̤</i>]						

Sonorants

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Nasal	<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>						
Lateral				<i>l</i>						
Apical				<i>r</i>						
Approximant	<i>w</i>					<i>y</i>				

Vowels

Front	Central	Back
Close	<i>i</i> / <i>ī</i>	<i>u</i> / <i>ū</i>
Mid	<i>e</i> / <i>ē</i>	<i>o</i> / <i>ō</i>
Open		<i>a</i> / <i>ā</i>

⁵ Represented as *k* in Arnold (2006).

⁶ Represented as *ḵ* in Arnold (2006).

In the variety of Maaloula, vowel quantity is phonemic, ‘short’ vowels contrasting with their ‘long’ equivalents. Long vowels appear only within stressed syllables; whenever the stress moves to another syllable through inflection or derivation, a long vowel is reduced to its short equivalent: $\bar{e} > i$, $\bar{i} > i / e$, $\bar{o} > a / u$, and $\bar{u} > u$, respectively. The correspondence between \bar{o} and a reflects the historical shift of $*\bar{a} > \bar{o}$ in accented syllables and $> a$ in unaccented syllables.

In addition to the ten phonemic vowels, there is also an epenthetic vowel ə which has no phonemic status, but is regularly inserted to break clusters of three or more consonants ($\text{CCC} > \text{CəCC}$), or a cluster of y and a word-final consonant ($\text{VyC\#} > \text{VyəC\#}$), e.g., *rayəṣ* ‘my head’. In the event that this epenthetic vowel appears between two separate words (e.g., *lōbəčbō* ‘if you want’), we have indicated the prosodic unity of these words with an undertie.

Similarly, we employ the undertie in the event of assimilation across word boundaries, e.g., *ducciẓzaṛpunne* ‘when they imprisoned him’, reflecting $*\text{duccil } \text{zaṛpunne}$; simplification of long consonants, e.g., *yfuḍhéḷhaṛimun*, reflecting $*\text{yfuḍhell } \text{haṛimun}$ ‘may He disgrace their womenfolk’; and juncture between words, e.g., *m-mēziḷann muṭranō* ‘when these bishops set out’, lit. ‘from the going of these bishops’. A related phenomenon is the archaising construct form of nouns such as ‘bishop’ in the title ‘Bishop of Latakia’ (*muṭrōṇLaḍkiye*). Normally, the stress falls upon the penultimate syllable unless the final syllable is ‘long’, either containing a long vowel or doubly closed. Apart from unassimilated loan words (in which the stress is borrowed

from the source language), there are some instances in which the stress appears in unexpected places. For example, when plural verbs take a direct object, the final *-n* of the plural morpheme may assimilate to the object marker *-l*, e.g., *calfúlmutrōna*, reflecting *calfun* + *-l mutrōna* ‘they dispatched the Bishop’. In such instances, the final syllable of the verb assumes the stress as it becomes doubly closed, and we, therefore, indicate the stress with an acute accent.

1.4. New Vocabulary

The present text contains several new lexical items otherwise lacking from Arnold (2019), in addition to new meanings for already attested vocabulary. Verbs are indicated by their past and subjunctive forms, for which the thematic stem vowels are not always predictable. The other forms can be inferred from the table above.

- ‘*a-tarbil* ‘via’ (cf. ‘*a tarba* ‘unterwegs’ [Arnold 2019, 819]). Its meaning within the phrase *calfúlmutrōna* [...] ‘*a-tarbiṣṣalīb al-Aḥmar* ‘they sent the bishop [...] via the Red Cross’ cannot be reduced to that of its components, as with other denominal prepositions, such as *duccil* ‘when’ (< ‘the place of’) and *ucmil* ‘like’ (< **uccil mil* ‘all from’).

- *‘illīṭa* ‘upper room; (any) room’. Per Arnold (2019, 89–90), it means ‘das obere Zimmer, Obergeschoß, Zimmer im Obergeschoß’, but during the conversation both speakers use it to refer indiscriminately to any room. Bekhet (p.c.) indicates that “commonly *‘illīṭa* refers to the upper room, while *marāb’a* refers to a room on the ground floor,” while acknowledging that both can be used as synonyms of *ḡorṭa*.
- *lahūčā* ‘Divinity (academic discipline)’, from Arabic *lāhūt* ‘godhead, deity; divine nature, divinity’ (Wehr 1971, 853).
- *mawsū’čā* ‘encyclopaedia, thesaurus’, from Arabic *mawsū’a* id. (Wehr 1971, 1069). Cf. Arnold (2019, 891) *ws’* II ‘verbreitern, auswalzen (Brotteig)’.
- *ucmil* ‘like, as’. Cf. Arnold (2019, 429) ‘jedesmal, wenn’.
- *z’ūray* ‘highwayman’, PL *zu’rānō*. Cf. Arabic *az’ar-* (PL *zu’rān-*) ‘highwayman, brigand, crook, scoundrel’ (Wehr 1971, 377), with a note ‘leb., pal.’. Arnold (2019, 954) also lists *az’ar*, but only with the meaning ‘kleiner’.

2.0. The Text

FŠ: *Duccil muṭrōna Kabbūši, ẓarpunne, maḏəm‘a ti muṭranō ...*

DB: *ducciz ẓarpunne uḏōy ...*

FŠ: *ẓarpunne uḏōy, maḏəm‘a ti muṭranō ti Ma‘rbōy ū Baṭərca calfūl muṭrōna Šō‘ra ū muṭrōn əl-‘Aškar, muṭrōn Laḏkiye, ‘a-tarbiṣ Šalib əl-Aḥmar. Zallun acšef a‘le. ẖribille⁷ b-‘illīṭa,⁸ ū mni‘ille uḏōy yšall. Mšall hū ‘a-kurpanīṭa, ū ‘a-ḥamra, kalles ḥamra. Lōb čūt kurpanīṭa, ‘a-šakftil leḥma. Mni‘ille, uḏōy. M-mēzil ann muṭranō, naklille ‘a-ẓerpa, naklille ‘a-ẓerpa. ẖribō ti uḏōy, ya‘ni ti zu‘ranō.*

⁷ Cf. JPA *zrb* ‘constrain’ (Sokoloff 1990, 181). In Arnold (2019, 966), this root appears as *zrb*, but in the speech of our informants the initial *z* has merged with the otherwise marginal phoneme *ẓ* through anticipatory assimilation.

⁸ Arnold (2019, 89) glosses this word as ‘das obere Zimmer, Obergeschoß, Zimmer im Obergeschoß’. Our informants employ this word indiscriminately as a synonym of *gorəfta* or *uḏōyṭa*, two other words for a room.

English Translation

FŠ: When Bishop Capucci, they⁹ imprisoned him, the Episcopal Synod ...

DB: When the Jews imprisoned him ...

FŠ: the Jews imprisoned him, the Western Episcopal Synod¹⁰ and the Patriarch¹¹ dispatched Bishop al-Chaer¹² and Bishop Achkar, the Bishop of Latakia,¹³ via the Red Cross.¹⁴ They went to check up on him. They imprisoned him in a chamber, and the Jews deterred him from praying. He prays over the Host,¹⁵ and over wine, a little wine. If there is no Host, over a piece of bread. They deterred him, the Jews. When these bishops set out, they moved him over to a prison, they moved him over to a prison.¹⁶ Prisoners who are Jews, meaning those who are crooks.

⁹ I.e., the Israeli police.

¹⁰ I.e., the permanent Holy or Episcopal Synod of the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchate. The people of Maaloula employ the terms *Ma'rbōy* 'Western' and *Manḥōy* 'Eastern' exclusively to distinguish Christian denominations. 'Western' comprises Uniate and Latin Catholics, among others, and 'Eastern' comprises Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, among others.

¹¹ I.e., the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church from 1967 to 2000, Patriarch Maximos V Hakim (1908–2001).

¹² Athanase al-Chaer (1897–1993) was bishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Baniyas, Lebanon, from 1951 to 1984.

¹³ Paul Achkar (1893–1982) was bishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Latakia in Lebanon from 1961 to 1981.

¹⁴ Because their countries and the State of Israel did not have formal diplomatic relations, the bishops travelled to Israel with the Red Cross.

¹⁵ I.e., he habitually prays over the Host.

¹⁶ Hilarion Capucci was already imprisoned at the Ramla maximum security prison, but they moved him to another cell (cell 318).

DB: Žehta ti žribilla ʔuḍōy bā.

FŠ: Aywá!

DB: Žribō uḍōy ...

FŠ: *Mappille*¹⁷ ɡorəfta rappa ũ manžūm, ũ masəmhille yşall. Bess aflulle ʕilliṭa billa ɬarʕa. Ōzin ōtyin hannun žribō, maşxrin aʕle. Yaʕni yōməl wōb bōṭa ʕilliṭa aḥsan. Yfuḍḥél ḥarīmun! ^AKān aḥsan^A. Itken maşxrin aʕle, činya mō, činya mō.¹⁸ Amma ti zallun acšef aʕle, muṭrōna ti Maržaʕyūn, Šōʕra, ũ muṭrōn Ladkīy əl-ʔAşkar < ... >

DB: Sarcis, Ōbəḷ Filīp iḥḥ emʕa ũ ḥammeš išən.

FŠ: Muṭrōna ḥōne ...

DB: Iskel b-ʕakle.

¹⁷ Arnold (2019, 32) supplies the form *mappville*, but our informant employs the simplified *mappille*.

¹⁸ A calque on colloquial Arabic *mədri šu* ‘I don’t know what’.

DB: The section in which they imprisoned Jews.

FŠ: Aye!

DB: Jewish prisoners ...

FŠ: They give him a large and clean room, and they allow him to pray. But they granted him a chamber without a door. These prisoners are coming and going, making fun of him. Meaning, it's better when he was in that [other] chamber. May He disgrace their womenfolk!¹⁹ ^AIt was better^A.²⁰ They started making fun of him, I dunno what, I dunno what. However, those who went to check up on him, the Bishop of Marjayoun,²¹ al-Chaer, and the Bishop of Latakia, Achkar <...>²²

DB: Sarkis,²³ Abu Filīp²⁴ lived 105 years.

FŠ: The bishop, his brother ...

DB: He remained rational.²⁵

¹⁹ Cf. Arabic *yifḍaḥ ḥarīmun* 'may He (= God) disgrace their womenfolk'.

²⁰ At this point, Filīp addresses our assistant Wa'el Muheasin, a Syrian of Palestinian ancestry, in colloquial Arabic.

²¹ Marjayoun (Arabic *Marj 'Ayūn*), a town of the Nabatieh Governorate in southern Lebanon, is the archeparchial seat of the bishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Baniyas, Lebanon.

²² At this point, a third party intrudes, and disrupts the conversation.

²³ Addressing Sergey Loesov.

²⁴ I.e., Filīp's father, who was the brother of Bishop Athanase, Filīp's paternal uncle (*dōdāl Filīp*).

²⁵ Lit. 'he stayed in his mind'.

DB: Čka'ēx, čmaḥəc 'emme, m-ğayr limōd, ucmil²⁶ 'ačmaḥəc 'emmil Ōbəl Adib. Uccil yōma 'arōba mfaḍ cōsəl 'arak aḥḥad bess, cōsa aḥḥad, šatēle 'emmil lokəmtəl xōla ikdum ma yidmux, uccil yōma.

FŠ: Ū 'sofra kalles.

DB: Ū 'sofra xett ōmar kalles. Ču nəmbakkarla ana, ti 'sofra.

FŠ: Šōt kalles xann. Muṭrōna ḥōne, em'a išən illa arəp'a yarəḥ ...

DB: ... iḥ. Ḥōne muṭrōna wōb, muṭrōna. Ē, iḥ em'a išən illa arəp'a yarəḥ. Xett əhrēna, Alō yarəḥmenn,²⁷ iskel b-'akle, wōb mawsū'ča m-'elma, trisəl lahūča wōb.

FŠ: Tōle Baṭərca ... Baṭərca ti Zayčun.

DB: Baṭərca ti ma'rbōy tōle m-fačərta lōxa.

FŠ: Tōle zarannah 'ayatte, 'ayattil muṭrōna. Imet əm-zibnō,²⁸ m-ṭišə' ū eṭlat, ^Atlātā ū tis'īn^A. Hōš, ūle šūrča, lōb əčbō' čsawrenna, nmasəmhīllax.

²⁶ Arnold (2019, 429) glosses this as 'jedesmal, wenn', but in this context it means 'as, like'.

²⁷ A shortened form of *yarəḥmennun* 'may he bless them', cf. Arnold (1990, 210).

²⁸ Note that he employs the perfect form *imet* 'he is dead' instead of the preterite *amet* 'he died'.

DB: You sit talking to him, not today,²⁹ as you are speaking with Abu Adīb.³⁰ Every day in the evening, he empties just one glass of arrack, one glass, he drinks it with a bit of food before he sleeps, every day.

FŠ: And in the morning a little bit.

DB: And also in the morning, he says, a little bit. I don't know about it, the morning one.

FŠ: He drinks a little like so. His brother the bishop, four months short of one hundred years ...

DB: ... he lived. His brother was a bishop, a bishop. Yes, he lived four months short of one hundred years. Yet another one,³¹ God bless them, he remained rational, he was an encyclopedia of knowledge, he had studied Divinity.

FŠ: Along came the Patriarch, the Zaitoun Patriarch.³²

DB: The Western Patriarch came here a while ago.

FŠ: He came to visit us on account of him, on account of the bishop. He died some time ago, in ninety-three, ^Aninety-three^A. Now there's a picture of him,³³ if you want to take a picture of it, we'll let you.

²⁹ Cf. Arabic *min ġēr ʿalyōm* 'other than today', namely earlier.

³⁰ This is the teknonym of our informant Filīp.

³¹ I.e., Abu Filīp's other brother.

³² Filīp refers to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Dormition in Damascus, colloquially known as the Zaitoun Church, which is the archiepiscopal see of the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch.

³³ I.e., of his uncle, Bishop Athanase al-Chaer.

3.0. Interlinear

We have furnished the text with interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses according to the Leipzig rules, with a few minor modifications in order to conserve space and represent the morphosyntax of the text with greater precision. For example, where the running text consistently indicates apocopated bound forms by means of the undertie, e.g., *calfūl muṭrōna* ‘they dispatched the Bishop’, the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses reflect their unbound forms, e.g., *calfull muṭrōna*. Preference is given to glossing examples with words rather than category labels, particularly in the case of substantives and adjectives. Additionally, we do not mark non-overt elements. Unaccommodated borrowings from Arabic, which we have left unglossed, are set off from the surrounding text by a superscript letter ^A, e.g., *^Akān aḥsan^A* ‘it was better^A’.

Regarding category labels, we employ all of those recommended by the Max Planck Institute, shortening SG to S, PL to P, and additionally introduce here the following labels, most of which are commonly met elsewhere in the literature:

AFF	affirmative
CNS	construct state
DOM	differential object marker
EXIST	existential predicate
FREE	the free, non-incorporated form of the noun
HD	marks the head of a noun phrase to indicate an immediately following, definite dependent
HES	hesitation
INCH	inchoative
IO	indirect object
NUM	numeral, a special form used immediately following a numeral

PN	proper noun
POS	predicative possession
PLEO	a pleonastic pronoun, which connects some verbal forms to the object marker or enclitic object pronouns
PP	present progressive.

- (1) *Duccil muṭrōn-a Kabbūši, ẓarp-un = n = e,*
 when bishop-FREE PN imprison.PST-3MP = PLEO = 3MS
maḏəm^c-a ti muṭran-ō ...
 synod-FREE of bishop-P
- (2) *duccil ẓarp-un = n = e uḏ-ōy,*
 when imprison.PST-3MP = PLEO = 3MS Jew-M.P.DEF
- (3) *ẓarp-un = n = e uḏ-ōy, maḏəm^c-a ti*
 imprison.PST-3MP = PLEO = 3MS Jew-M.P.DEF synod-FREE of
muṭran-ō ti Ma'rb-ōy ũ Baṭarc-a
 bishop-P REL Western-M.P.DEF and Patriarch-FREE
calf-ul = l muṭrōn-a Šō'ra ũ muṭrōn-a
 assign.PST-3MP = DOM bishop-FREE PN and bishop-FREE
əl-'Aškar, muṭrōn Laḏkiye, 'a = tarb = l Šalib.əl-Aḥmar
 PN bishop.CNS PN through = way = HD PN
- (4) *Zal-lun acšef a'l = e.*
 go.PST-3MP check.PST on = 3MS
- (5) *Zrib-il = le b = 'ill-īt-a, ũ*
 imprison.PRF-MP = 3MS in = chamber-F-FREE and
mni^c-il = le uḏ-ōy y-šall.
 deter.PRF-MP = 3MS Jew-M.P.DEF 3M-pray.SBJV
- (6) *Mšall hū 'a = kurpan-īt-a, ũ*
 pray.PRS he on = Host-F-FREE and

- ‘a = *ḥamr-a*, *kalles ḥamr-a*.
 on = wine-FREE little wine-FREE
- (7) *Lōb čūt kurpan-īt-a*, ‘a = *šakf-t=l leḥm-a*.
 if EXIST.NEG Host-F-FREE on = piece-F = HD bread-FREE
- (8) *Mni‘-il = le*, *uḏ-ōy*.
 deter.PRF-MP = 3MS Jew-M.P.DEF
- (9) *M = mēzy = l hann muṭran-ō*, *nakl-il = le*
 from = going = HD these bishop-P move.PRS-MP = 3MS
 ‘a = *zerp-a*, *nakl-il = le* ‘a = *zerp-a*.
 to = prison-FREE move.PRS-MP = 3MS to = prison-FREE
- (10) *Zrib-ō ti uḏ-ōy*, *ya‘ni ti zu‘ran-ō*.
 prisoner-P REL Jew-M.P.DEF meaning REL crook-P
- (11) *Žeh-t-a ti zrib-il = l uḏ-ōy b = ā*.
 side-F-FREE REL imprison.PRF-MP = DOM Jew-M.P.DEF in = 3FS
- (12) *Aywá!*
 AFF
- (13) *Zrib-ō uḏ-ōy ...*
 prisoner-P Jew-M.P.DEF
- (14) *Mapp-il = le gorəf-t-a rapp-a ũ manzūm*,
 give.PRS-MP = 3MS chamber-F-FREE big-F.S.INDF and neat.F.S.INDF
ũ masəmh-il = le y-şall.
 and let.PRS-MP = 3MS 3M-pray.SBJV
- (15) *Bess af-l-ul = le ‘ill-īt-a*
 but allow.PST-DO-3MP = 3MS.IO chamber-F-FREE
billa tar‘-a.
 without door-FREE
- (16) *Ōz-in ōty-in hann-un zrib-ō*,
 go.PRS-MP come.PRS-MP these-M prisoner-M.P.DEF

maşxr-in aʕ = e.

mock.PRS-3MP on = 3MS

- (17) *Yaʕni yōmāl w-ōb b = hōṭa ʕill-īt-a aḥsan.*

Meaning when PST-be in = that.F chamber-F-FREE better

- (18) *Y-fuḍḥ = enn = l ḥarīm = un!*

3M-disgrace.SBJV = PLEO = DOM womenfolk = 3MP

- (19) *ʔKān aḥsanʔ.*

be.PST better

- (20) *Itken maşxr-in aʕ = e, čī = n-ya mō,*

INCH.PST mock.PRS-MP on = 3MS NEG = 1-know.PRS what

čī = n-ya mō.

NEG = 1-know.PRS what

- (21) *Amma ti zal-lun acšef aʕ = e,*

however REL go.PST-3MP check.PST on = 3MS

muṭrōn-a ti Maržaʕyūn, Šōʕra, ũ

bishop-FREE of PN PN and

muṭrōn Laḍkiye əl-ʔAškar <... >

bishop.CNS PN PN

- (22) *Sarcis, Ōbəl.Filip iḥḥ*

PN PN live.PST

emʕa ũ ḥammeš išən.

hundred and five.F year.NUM

- (23) *Muṭrōn-a ḥōn = e ...*

bishop-FREE brother = 3MS

- (24) *Iskel b = ʕakl = e.*

remain.PST in = mind = 3MS

- (25) *Č-kaʕē-x, č-maḥəc ʕemm = e,*

2-sit.PRS-2MS 2-speak.PRS with = 3MS

m = ġayr = l *imōḍ, ucmil* ‘a-č-maḥəc
 from = another = HD today as PP-2-speak.PRS
 ‘*emmil* *Ōbəl.Adīb.*

with PN

- (26) *Uccil yōm-a* ‘*arōb-a* *mfadḍ* *cōs = l* ‘*arak*
 every day-FREE evening-FREE empty.PRS glass = HD arak
aḥḥad *bess, cōs-a* *aḥḥad*,
 one.M only glass-FREE one.M
šaṭē = le ‘*emmil lokəm-t = l*
 drink.PRS = 3MS with bit-F = HD

- (27) *xōl-a* *ikḍum ma y-ḍmux,* *uccil yōm-a.*
 food-FREE before that 3M-sleep.SBJV every day-FREE

- (28) *Ū* ‘*sofr-a* *kalles.*
 and morning-FREE little

- (29) *Ū* ‘*sofr-a* *xett* *ōmar* *kalles.*
 and morning-FREE also say.PRS little

- (30) *Ču n-mbakkar = la ana, ti* ‘*sofr-a.*
 NEG 1-know.PRS = 3FS I REL morning-FREE

- (31) *Šōṭ* *kalles xann.*
 drink.PRS little so

- (32) *Muṭrōn-a ḥōn = e,* *em‘a išan*
 bishop-FREE brother = 3MS hundred year.NUM
illa *arəp‘a yarəḥ ...*
 without four.M month.NUM

- (33) ... *iḥḥ. Ḥōn = e* *muṭrōn-a w-ōb, muṭrōn-a.*
 live.PST brother = 3MS bishop-FREE PST-be bishop-FREE

- (34) *Ē, iḥḥ* *em‘a išan* *illa*
 yes live.PST hundred year.NUM without

arəpʿa yarəḥ.

four.M month.NUM

- (35) *Xett ḥrēn-a, Alō ya-rəḥm = enn,*

also other-FREE God 3M-have.mercy.SBJV = PLEO.3MP

iskel b = ʿakl = e, w-ōb mawsūʿ-č-a

remain.PST in = mind = 3MS PST-be encyclopedia-F-FREE

m = ʿelm-a, trīs = l lahūč-a w-ōb.

of = knowledge-FREE study.PRF = DOM Divinity-FREE PST-be

- (36) *Tō-le Baṭarc-a ... Baṭarc-a ti Zayčun.*

come.PST-3MS Patriarch-FREE Patriarch-FREE of PN

- (37) *Baṭarc-a ti maʿrb-ōy tō-le*

Patriarch-FREE of Western-M.P.DEF come.PST-3MS

m = fačər-t-a l = hōxa.

from = time-F-FREE to = here

- (38) *Tō-le zar = ann = aḥ ʿayatt = e,*

come.PST-3MS visit.PST = PLEO = 1P because.of = 3MS

ʿayattil muṭrōn-a.

because.of bishop-FREE

- (39) *Imet m = zibn-ō, m = ʿišə ǔ etlat*

die.PRF from = time-P from = ninety and three.F

- (40) *ʿtlātá ǔ tisʿinʿ.*

three and ninety

- (41) *Hōš, ūl-e šūr-č-a, lōb č-bōʿ*

now POS-3MS picture-F-FREE if 2-want.PRS

č-šawr = enn = a, n-masəmh-il = lax.

2-photograph.SBJV = PLEO = 3FS 1-let.PRS-MP = 2MS

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A SYRIAC CHRISTIAN IN THE TURKISH MILITARY: A TEXT IN THE ȚUROYO DIALECT OF MIDIN

Otto Jastrow

This paper serves a twofold purpose. It is intended as an homage to my distinguished colleague and friend, Geoffrey Khan, whose untiring work in Neo-Aramaic studies has produced a number of outstanding monographs and articles and rescued many dialects from the brink of oblivion. I wish him a happy retirement and ongoing zest for research, both to his own contentment and the benefit of our profession. The paper also aims to honour the memory of Ido Talay, a Syriac Christian from Midin in Tur Abdin who passed away on 27 September 2022 in Ludwigsburg, Germany. He was born in 1934 and moved to Germany as a worker in 1977. A year later, he was joined by his family. The narrative of his military service gives an inside view of the Turkish military and the extent to which it was dominated by religious intolerance. From the story emerges the picture of a man who is firm in his beliefs and preserves his dignity in the face of humiliation.

Ido Talay's story was recorded by his son Shabo in 1990 and was included in my *Lehrbuch der Țuroyo-Sprache* (Jastrow

1992), which is based on the Midin dialect.¹ The text is here republished with an English translation. It is unchanged from the first edition, except for the substitution of the symbols ‘ and ’ for ʃ and ʔ, respectively. The text contains a number of uncommon words, in particular Turkish loanwords relating to the military. They are given in an appendix after the text. Words marked by ^T...^T are direct quotations from Turkish.

A summary of the phonology of the Midin dialect is given in Jastrow (1992, 9–19), where the rules for transcription are also outlined. The most intriguing phonological problem is the status of the two short vowels, ə and ũ. They are, to a large extent, distributed like allophones of a single short high vowel */ə/, which is realised as ə or ũ, depending on the consonantal environment. The vowel ũ appears mainly in syllables with initial *k*, *g*, *x*, *ġ*, *q*, or with final *l* or *r*, e.g., *külle* ‘all of them’, *ħūr* ‘look!’ and in syllables ending on *x*, *ġ*, *q*, ‘, or *ħ*, e.g., *nūxroyo* ‘foreign’, *šūġlo* ‘work’, *zuħto* ‘fear’. Note also *mūklo* ‘food’ and *buġro* ‘bullet’. Adjoining to front consonants there is predominantly ə, e.g., *tfənge* ‘rifle’, *əzən* ‘furlough’. This distribution is, however, not completely predictable and there are very few cases of minimal pairs, e.g., *kətle* ‘he has, possesses’ : *kūtle* ‘meat dumplings’, *ħəlmo* ‘dream’ : *ħūlmo* ‘she (it) thickens’. This suggests a residual phonemic opposition between ə and ũ with a minimal functional load. In the text ə and ũ are noted consistently.

¹ I am deeply indebted to Shabo Talay, who recorded for me the texts which later appeared in the book and assisted me throughout my work on the book.

A note on the marking of vowel length and word stress: *i*, *u*, *e*, *o* are always long; in closed syllables, they are marked as *ī*, *ū*, *ē*, *ō*, e.g., *kīn* ‘hatred’, *gdāmmūtle* ‘you will say it’, *d-əzzōxla* ‘that you may go to it’. The vowel *a* is pronounced long in open syllables and short in closed syllables; in the opposite case, we write *ā* and *ā*, respectively, e.g., *zlām* ‘man’, *tāne* ‘alone’. The vowels *ə* and *ū* are always short. Word stress is on the penultimate, otherwise it is marked by an acute, e.g., *húwallan* ‘they gave us’, *azzé* ‘he went’. Prefixes attached with a double line (=) always carry the main stress, e.g., *i-‘askāriye* ‘the military’; enclitics attached with a single line (-) do not influence the word stress, e.g., *basəmtō-wa* ‘she (it) was pleasant’.

1.0. Text

- (1) (*Shabo Talay: maḥkīlan əšmo ānnaqqa ‘al i-‘askāriye yabo, i-‘askāriyayḏux məqqa basəmtō-wa.*) *i-‘askāriyayḏi, gdomaṇṇūx u-bəsmayḏa w u-lo-bəsmayḏa, ū‘do gdəḏ‘ət, ya basəmtō-wa w ya lo.*

(Shabo Talay: Now tell us something about the military service, Father, about how pleasant your military service was.) My military service, I’ll tell you what was pleasant for me and what wasn’t. Now you’ll know whether it was pleasant or not.

- (2) *ono azzino li-ʿaskāriye, lo-maṭina lu-belūk hūl ḥamšaḥsar-yawme, hawxa ba-dkoṭone, bu=gabano w b-hano, maḡḡállallan. ḥaroye-wayna.*

I went to military service, but we did not reach our company until two weeks (later),² to that extent they kept us busy in various places, here and there, so we were the last ones (to arrive).

- (3) *bəṭṭər, u-yawmo qamoyo d-maʿbārṛallan, kūl-ḥa maslāmmallan l-belūk, aḥna kəmmínale belūk bi-ʿaskāriye.*

Then, on the first day they took us in, they assigned each one of us to a (different) company, we call it *belūk* (company) in the military.

- (4) *w fəlge=d-yawmo mamṭalle u-mūklo w hūwallan-yo, aḥna xilan i-ʿrayto, w ar=rabe d-ʿal rišan, ač=čawišat, aṭən mšayalle mərre, mən=noše-hatu?*

At noon they brought the food and gave it to us, we ate lunch, and the people above us, the sergeants, came and asked: “What people are you?”

- (5) *w aḥ-ḥawronaydi, kūl-ḥa məlle ono flān-no. əmmi aḥna u-šartaydan, di-ṭayuto d-gaban, u-zlām d-ʾoṭe li-ʿaskāriye, ko-lozəm mšahəd.*

Each one of my companions said: “I am so-and-so.” They said: “(It is) our condition, in the Islamic religion which we have, that any man who comes to military service must pronounce the Muslim confession of faith.”

² Lit. ‘fifteen days’.

- (6) *w u-šarṭ di-šāhada*³ *di-ṭayutaydan aḥna hiya haṭe-yo. w gdammūtle ḥamšo-šarṭat-ne, w gəṃšahdutu, w i-naqlayo ktowutu ṭaye.*

“This is the condition of the confession of faith in our Islamic religion. You will pronounce them, they are five conditions,⁴ and you will pronounce the profession of faith, and then you will be Muslims.”

- (7) *aḥ-ḥawronaydi mu-gabano w m-ano diḏi, ma-tre gabe, kūl-ḥa mšahadle lu-gorān du-dinayde. maṭən eli, əmmi mšahād. omanṇo ma mə-mšahadno, mə-gdomanṇo? əmmi qay ma lathət ṭayo? omanṇo lo.*

My companions to my right and my left,⁵ from the two sides, each one pronounced the confession of faith according to his religion. They reached me and said: “Confess!” I said: “What should I confess, then? What should I say?” They said: “Why, are you not a Muslim?” I said: “No.”

- (8) *hən ḥayriwa lu-gabano diḏi, hən ḥayriwa l-ano diḏi, ya əmmiwa u-zlamano, ənsān mšaklo-yo bu-šəklaydan, ide w raḡle w foto, w komər ono lanno ṭayo, yoqsa mən-hət? omanṇo suroyo-no.*

Some looked at me from this side and some from that side, they said: “This man is a human person shaped in our shape, his hand, his foot, (his) face, and yet he says: ‘I am not a Muslim.’ What are you, then?” I said: “I am a Christian.”

³ The Muslim profession of faith, *šahāda* in Arabic.

⁴ A reference to the ‘five pillars of Islam’, the first one of which is the *šahāda*.

⁵ Lit. ‘from this side and this side of me’.

- (9) *mdamri me d-məlli şuroyo-no, mi-naqlayo zbətte kīn mini, w maqámmallan lu-ta'lim.*

They were astonished when I said that I am a Christian, and from that moment they started to hate me. (Later) they deployed us for exercise.

- (10) *i-naqla qamayto du-ta'lim, húwallan a-tfəngat, əmmi mḥalequ ruḥayxu li-ar'ə dmaxu, 'am i-tfənge, bu-ta'lim hiya haṭe şən'a di-'askəriye-yo.*

At the first exercise they gave us the rifles and said: "Throw yourselves on the ground, lie prostrate with the rifle. In the exercise this is the military art."

- (11) *i-naqla d-³mḥalaqlan ruḥan li-ar'ə mžədlan ruḥan, ṭabí 'al d-mərralli mšahád lo-mšahadli, w naqqa aṭi mḥele 'al adni, šāqame, adni kayiwo, hawino karr.*

When we threw ourselves on the ground and stretched out... of course, because he (the sergeant) had told me to pronounce the confession of faith and I didn't, he suddenly came and punched me on my ear. My ear hurt and I turned deaf.

- (12) *hawino hül yarḥo karr. əzzáwayna aš-şubayiye obənwaylan dars, lo-šoma'wayno. faqat bəttər me yarḥo, həlli adni hula w šqila, əšmo-əšmo ftiḥo.*

I remained deaf for a month. We would go and the officers would teach us, but I did not hear. But after a month I noticed that my ear was responding again,⁶ and it slowly opened.

⁶ Lit. 'gave and took'.

- (13) *aḏni ftiḥo, w ono, ʿal d-kátwayno ono šuroyo, w u-tabūr, lo u=belukaydan tāne, u-tabūr, i=alayiye, ənsān... haka kətwā-ze šuroye nošo lo-mağrewa omarwa ono šuroyo-no, mi-zūḥto daḏ-ḏarbe.*

My ear opened, and I, because I was a Christian, and the battalion, not only our company (but) the battalion, the (whole) regiment, no one... even if there were Christians, nobody dared to say: "I am a Christian," for fear of beatings.

- (14) *huwe əšmi lu-yūzbaši, mərre d-kətyo šuroyo. ono nobačči qm aṭ=topat-wayno, u-yūzbaši aṭili qréleli, b-lalyo, omər itúx l-arke.*

They gave my name to the captain, they said: "He is a Christian." I was on guard at the cannons, the captain came and called me, at night, he said: "Come here."

- (15) *mḡadámli, omər ma mən-hət? omaṇṇo šuroyo-no, omər ṭhayr^r, hat ṭayo-hət lo-kūḏ'ət d-kəthət ṭayo. ono koḏa'no hat ṭayo-hət, aṇṇa kəmmət šuroyo-no. hat lo-kūḏ'ət.*

I went towards him and he said: "So what are you?" I said: "I am a Christian." He said: "No, you are a Muslim, but you don't know that you are a Muslim. I know that you are a Muslim although you say: 'I am a Christian.' You don't know it."

- (16) *omaṇṇo lo u-yūzbašiyayḏi, ono koḏa'no zlām šuroyo-no, w aḥna noše šuroye mšihoye-na.*

I said: "No, my captain, I know that I am a Christian man, and we are Syriac Christians."

- (17) *me d-hawxa mälli, m'akəs mini, omər naxane noše kito hawxa, bu-šəklano komşalən, hzalli, hat m-anək-hət? omanno e.*

When I told him like that, he got angry at me, and he said: "In that case... there are people like that and they pray in such and such a way, I have seen them. Are you one of those?" I said: "Yes."

- (18) *omər m-adyawma azolo, ramhəl, lə-gtorenux gabi. hül ü'do rohamwaynux omáwayno nəfar tawwo-hət w ktowət gabi, amma ramhəl gəmsadaññux l-dükto.*

He said: "From today onwards, tomorrow, I won't keep you next to me. Until now I liked you, I thought that you were a good soldier and you would stay with me, but tomorrow I'll send you to a (different) place."

- (19) *i-naqqa d-hawxa mälleli, omanno kotolabno m-alo, šxwa d-^əmšadrətli. koba'no d-^əmšadrətli. lo=koba'no d-^əono-ze fašno bi-dükto daḍ=ḍarbe.*

When he told me like this, I said: "I pray to God that you actually send me away. I want you to send me away, I also don't want to stay in a place of beatings."

- (20) *şafro qayimina, ač-čawişat... ono tōpčī-wayno, 'al i-tope-wayno, w u-xabro azzé lač-čawişaydan, d-^əgnofaqno, w qayimi, lo-maqballe mine.*

In the morning, we got up, and the sergeants... I was a gunner, I was at the cannon. When the news reached the sergeants that I would be leaving, they got up, they didn't accept it from him.

- (21) *mərre zlām... hiye d-koqodər matʿən as=samārat dab-baḡle, w maḥət ap=parčayat di-ṭope ʿal ḥaṣayye, i-ṭope d-ʿal ḥaṣe dab-baḡle məblīwaynala laṭ-ṭurone.*

They said: “He is a man who can pack the saddles of the mules and put the parts of the cannon on their back—the cannon which we transported on the back of the mules to the mountains.

- (22) *w ʿal aṭ-ṭuronanək məblīwaynala, w eba, i-naqla d-ʾmḡarbīwayna u-mḥoyo, b-riše daṭ-ṭurone waxt du-talgo, moḥīwayna ab-būḡre, lu=ilofo.*

We transported it to the mountains, and when we practised firing, on the mountain tops at the time of snow, we would fire bullets with it, for exercise.

- (23) *ač-čawišaydi lo-maqballe d-mofaqli u-yūzbaši. u-yūzbaši kali, w disa fayəšno b-dūkti.*

My sergeants didn’t accept that the captain removed me. The captain desisted, and I stayed at my post.

- (24) *bəttər m-aṭe mdawamle. ono, hiya i-lista, d kətyo bu=belūk, lašən i-ʿaskāriye, mo w ʿəsri=nāfare-wayna, l-kulan.*

So things went on. I... there was a list at the company, of the military—we were one hundred and twenty soldiers—for all of us.

- (25) *tre-šaxsat, ḥa gəzzé qm aṭ-ṭopat, šaxsat gəzzehən qm ab-baḡle d-koṭūʿni aṭ-ṭopat-zede, ktowən bi=qawiše gzbṭi noba, w hawxa bu-šəklano mbawbe-na.*

Two people... one will go to the cannons, some people will go to the mules that carry the cannons, (others) will be on guard in the dormitory. In this way we were divided up.

- (26) *ḥa=yawmo, ḥənnək külle kūḏ'i kəmmi l-ʔḥdode, d-ʔono lo=kūtʔwili bi=qawiše, ʔal d-ʔono latno mənne. lo=kəb'i kūṭwili bi=qawiše. yawmo mǧaləṭ ḥa may=yazičiye, mak=kaṭowe, kṭūleli bi=qawiše.*

One day... all of them knew and told each other not to list me for the dormitory, because I wasn't one of them. They didn't want to list me for the dormitory. One day one of the planners⁷ made a mistake and listed me for the dormitory.

- (27) *ʔaṣriye qrele məlle, u=kaṭowo koqore, an=nobaččiye, dad əḏʔutu kül-ḥa düktayxu əzzōxla.*

In the evening, the planner called out to the guards, he said: "So that all of you know your place and go there."

- (28) *ono-ste kal komaṣəṭno aʔlayye, naqla maʔele qole, omər ʔIdo Talay, gʔobəṭ noba bi=qawiše. i-naqla d-hawxa məlle fṣəḥno, omanṇo āy ašər bi=qawiše ádlalyo gšəḥalli, saṭwo-wa.*

I was listening to them, and suddenly he raised his voice and said: "Ido Talay will be on guard in the dormitory." When he said that I was glad, I thought: Oh! In the dormitory tonight I certainly shall keep warm. It was winter.

- (29) *i-naqqa d-hiye məlle, u=čawiš d-kəṭwa i-noba b-ide u=lalyawo, omər ašər lə-gṭorina ʔIdo howe bi=qawiše. ʔIdo gəṃšadrínale qm aṭ-ṭopat larwal. wəyaxūt bi=noba dükto-ḥreto. omanṇo qay?*

'When (the planner) said so, the sergeant who was responsible for the guard that night said: "We shall definitely not accept that ʔIdo will be in the dormitory. We shall send ʔIdo to the cannons outside or to keep guard somewhere else." I said: "Why?"'

⁷ Lit. 'writers'.

- (30) *edī lo-tlele me qumī! omār hat zlām šuroyo, w aḥna mo w ‘asri-nāfare ṭaye ma lo-kūd‘at lə-gmaḡrina maḥtīnalūx nobaččī ‘al kulan, ‘āḡaba qūṭlāt kulan, mə-gsaymina b-lalyo damixe aḥna? lə-gmaḡrina maḥtīnalūx.*

He did not even hide (his thoughts) from me! He said: “You are a Christian and we are one hundred and twenty Muslim soldiers. Don’t you know that we don’t dare appoint you as guard for all of us? If you kill us all, what shall we do when we are all asleep at night? We do not dare to appoint you.”

- (31) *i-naqqa d-məlle omanno lo-kəzzino ono-ze larwal. madām ki lə-gmaḥtətli a‘layxu ono-ze lo-gəzzi, w mḥéleli u-mede d-‘aṭi mine, ono-ste mzaratli a‘le zərṭat d-rab mam-məḥwoṭe.*

When he said that I said: “As for me I won’t go outside. Since you don’t appoint me as your guard, I won’t go.” He beat me as much as he could, and I hurled threats at him which were even worse than the blows.

- (32) *bu-ḥalano daməxno, l-azzino lo larwal w lo zbətli noba lawḡūl.*
At this point I went to sleep: I neither went outside nor kept guard inside.

- (33) *ṣafro xayifo qayimina, w qayəm u-čawišawo ma‘lele qole, an-nāfare i-naqqa d qayimi, omār b-šrolo l-kūlxu ṭrowe ma‘lūm, me ‘asriye, w hol ṣafro, šanto l-azze l-‘ayni.*

Early in the morning we got up. The sergeant got up and raised his voice when the soldiers got up, he said: “Really, you all should know that from evening until morning I did not sleep at all.”⁸

⁸ Lit. ‘Sleep did not come to my eye’.

- (34) *w omárwayno ha 'Ido gdoṭe ghoğamli, w ha gdoṭeli. w bu-šāklano šapə' u=yawmawo-ste, lo=maḥtiwayli bi=qawiše nobačči.*

"I thought: Now 'Ido is coming to attack me, and now he is coming for me." So passed that day as well, and they did not appoint me (again) as guard in the dormitory.

- (35) *w madəmlə u=šūğlano. madəmlə u=šūğlano, fayəšno, məqqa d-ʾoṭewa, i=naqqa d-howewa yawme d šabṭawoṭe, gəzzéhənwə aš=šubayiye l-aʾ=ʾəznat, w an-nāfare l-aʾ=ʾəznat, w i=naqqa d howíwayna bu=bayto gdoṭewa šubayiye nūxroye aʿlan. hül d-ʾoṭənwə mu=əzən.*

Things went on like this, I stayed... as many as there came... When the weekend came, the officers went on furlough, the soldiers likewise went on furlough, and when we stayed in the barracks, there came officers who were unfamiliar to us. Until (the familiar personnel) returned from their furlough.

- (36) *w ač=čawišaydan d-gabi, gdəmmiwa laš=šubayiyanək, e küďʿutu 'Ido mə=zlām-yo, küďʿutu? hat küďʿət 'Ido latyo ṭayo?*

The sergeants who were with me would say to the officers: "Do you know what kind of man 'Ido is, do you know? Do you know that 'Ido isn't a Muslim?"

- (37) *w hiye gdoṭewa gdomarwa ono kaṭīno, b-riše di-šato, wayaxūt bu=ʿeḏo, d-korazno aʿlayxu, u=dino di=ṭayuto mək=komər.*

The (officer in question) would come and say: "I have come"—on New Year's Day or a (Muslim) holiday—"to give you a sermon about the religion of Islam, what it says."

- (38) *i-naqqa d hawxa māl̄le, hāman əmmi ha tūx ḥūr! amār l-ʿIdo, amār l-ʿIdo balki mafahmātle. aṭi qrēleli omər tūx ʿIdo tūx! omər taw!*

When he said so, they immediately told him: “Come and look! Tell ʿIdo! Tell ʿIdo, maybe you can make him understand.” He came and called me: “ʿIdo, come here! Sit down!”

- (39) *mən-yo? omaṇṇo ono latno qaroyo, omər taw bu=gabawo di-maša, motāwleli w hiye b-gabo, w ḡḡilina. ḡḡilina, omər hat lə-gmətyaqnət d-⁹Mḥammad kətyo u-nbiyo d-aloho?*

“What is it?” I said: “I don’t know how to read.” He said: “Sit on that side of the table!” He made me sit and he (sat) on (the opposite) side, and we talked. We talked, and he said: “Don’t you believe that Mḥammad is the prophet of God?”

- (40) *omaṇṇo latyo bu=mgalyunaydan ḥatta d-mətyaqanne. ḡūd howewa bu=mgalyunaydan gmətyaqánwayno, omaṇṇo bu=kto-waydan latyo nbiyo. lə-gmətyaqanne. me Mšīḥo peva lə-gmətyaqanno l-nošo.*

I said: “He does not figure in our gospel, so that I should believe in him. If he were in our gospel, I would believe.” I added: “In our book he isn’t a prophet, I don’t believe in him. Except for the Messiah, I don’t believe in anybody.”

- (41) *omər ^Töyleyse^T, hat kūḏʿat Mḥammad mə-škāl aṭi li-arʿo? omaṇṇo mə-škāl?*

He said: “So do you know how Mḥammad came into the world?”⁹ I said: “How?”

⁹ Lit. ‘earth’.

(42) *omər Mḥammad bāri me d-howe, bāri me d-howe b-karse di-emo, aloho kt̩ule, i-šahadaṭe d-kosəhdīnala, ‘al əšme, d-kəṭwa u-nbiyo d-aloho, ‘al i-katpate i-rāste, ‘al u-pōl kt̩uto-wa.* He said: “Before Mḥammad existed, before he was in his mother’s womb, God wrote the confession of faith which we pronounce on his name, (namely) that he was the prophet of God. It was written on his right shoulder, on the shoulder blade.”

(43) *omaṇṇo ono mede hawxa lo-ḥzeli. bele omər ma lə-gmətya-qnətle? omaṇṇo lo. e omər ^Töyleyse^T, ono koda‘no u-šaxsano mən-šaxs-yo. lə-gmətyaqən b-³Mḥammad.*

I said: “I haven’t seen anything like that.” He said: “Oh yes! Do you really not believe in him?” I said: “No.” He said: “In that case, I know what kind of person this person is. He won’t believe in Mḥammad.”

(44) *omər ko mamṭewu mḥaṭo! mamṭalle mḥaṭo, málleli málle ‘Ido zbaṭ iḍi, şaw‘i! hawxa i-şaw‘ate diḍe i-rabṭo mərhole eli, w zbiṭoli, w maq=qaḥrayḍi ḥəngi d-‘ağəz mini ‘al d-lo-komša-hadno lo-koweno ṭayo xtote, mädle li-mḥato w xrizole l-şaw‘e, ‘amuqo, w naqla admo komo nafəq.*

He said: “Go ahead, bring a needle!” They brought a needle, and he said to me: “‘Ido, seize my hand, my finger!” He extended his thumb to me, I seized it, and in his rage, because he was so angry at me that I did not confess and become a Muslim like himself, he took the needle and plunged it deep into his thumb. And at once dark¹⁰ blood came out.

¹⁰ Lit. ‘black’.

- (45) *w ḥṣälle, w ṭəryole hawxa, w u-admo konoḥət. omər de hawli idūx w mādūx i-mḥato w mḥay eba hat-ze! hūlile ṣaw'ī, mafat-loli laff ele hiye zbiṭole, w ono mḥeli i-mḥato b-ṣaw'ī mofaqli u-admo, u-admaydi ṣa'ət me diḏe-wa.*

He squeezed it and held it like that, and the blood was dripping. He said: "Now give me your hand, take the needle and prick it (your finger) as well." I gave him my finger, I turned it towards him and he seized it. I thrust the needle into my finger and made the blood flow, and my blood was lighter¹¹ than his.

- (46) *koməftakanṇo m-iḏe d-lo-ʿamiqo i-mḥato ḡalabe, lo-maʿamqoli xtote, balki m-awxa-wa, w balki-ste u-admayde akyam me diḏi-wa, aṇṇa qrele malle li-ḡāmaʿa toxu, ḥuru! kūlxu!*

I think because the needle didn't go very deep. I did not push it as deeply as he, maybe it was because of that, and maybe my blood was indeed lighter than his. But he called the people present: "Come and have a look! All of you!"

- (47) *kibi d-omānṇanxu bu-dinaydi, u-zlamano ū'do mparčqina qar'e lo-kowe ṭayo. m-iḏe d-u-admayde latyo kamilo. diḏe ṣa'uto-yo, diḏi admo komo-yo. m-awxa qūtlīnale-ste lo-kowe ṭayo.*

"I can tell you by my religion that this man, even if we now smashed his skull, will not become a Muslim. Because his blood is not perfect; his is light and mine is dark blood. Therefore, even if we killed him, he won't become a Muslim."

¹¹ Lit. 'more yellow'.

- (48) *w qām, an-nāfare əmmi hawī dārang, zan səlqina maština ab-baḡle. omər hatu slaqu w ono w ʿIdo gdoṭina hedi hedi.*

The soldiers said: "It is getting late, let's go up and water the mules." He said: "You go up and ʿIdo and I will follow slowly."

- (49) *bi-saršale-yo, koṭe talgo b-Arzārūm, bi-šato daḥ-ḥamši w əšto. Bi-šato daḥ-ḥamši w əšto u-yawmo=qamoyo-wa.*

It was on New Year's Day and it was snowing in Erzurum, in the year fifty six. It was the first day of the year fifty six.

- (50) *w saliqina hiye maḥatle lapkat b-ide, ono lo, oṭewa talgo, hənnək maštalle ab-baḡle, w ono w hiye kalənnə larwal, omər ʿIdo omaṇṇo mən yo? omər iṣallah, tloṭo-yawme-ḥrene disa ḡhozenūx, ktowət ṭayo.*

We were going up, he put gloves on his hands, me not. It was snowing. They watered the mules, and he and I were outside. He said: "ʿIdo." I said: "Yes?" He said: "God willing, in three days' time I shall see you again, and you will become a Muslim."

- (51) *omaṇṇo kətlūx ũʿdo amro aʿli, šāqame wayaxūt tloṭo-šāqamat... m-ũʿdo w laxaf bass ḥozətli, w lo-koweno ṭayo.*

I said: "Do you have any order for me now, a slap or three slaps... from now on you won't see me again, and I shall not become a Muslim."

- (52) *w qayəm tamo, mḥēleli a-tre šāqamayde, w mu-yawmawo edi u-zlamawo haw ḥzeli w haw mʿamalle aʿli.*

On the spot he administered me his two slaps, and from that day I did not see this man again and he didn't give me orders.

2.0. Appendix

The following are notes on some lexical and grammatical forms in the text, ordered by sentence number.

- (1) *u bəsmayḏa w u lo bəsmayḏa* lit. 'its pleasantness and its unpleasantness'
- (2) *belūk* 'company' (Turk. *bölük*)
- (4) *čawiš*, PL *čawišat* 'sergeant' (Turk. *çavuş*)
- (8) *yoqsa* 'or, or else' (Turk. *yoksa*)
- (9) *mdamər*, *midamer* 'be astonished, amazed'
- (10) *dmaxu!* 'lie down! (PL)' (not 'sleep!')
- (12) *šubāy*, PL *šubayīye* 'officer' (Turk. *subay*)
- (13) *tabūr* 'battalion' (Turk. *tabur*)
alayiye 'regiment' (Turk. *alay*)
- (14) *yūzbaši*, PL *yūzbašiye* 'captain' (Turk. *yüzbaşı*)
nobaččī, PL *nobaččiye* 'guard' (Turk. *nöbetçi*)
tope, PL *topat* 'cannon' (Turk. *top*)
- (15) *hayır* (Turk.) 'no'
- (17) *nāxane* 'if so, in that case' (Kurd. *naxwe*)
- (18) *m-ádyawma azolo* 'from today onwards' (lit. 'from today going')
nāfar, PL *nāfare* 'soldier' (Turk. *nefer*)
- (19) *šxwa* 'then, in that case' (Kurd. *jixwe* 'obviously')
- (20) *ṭōpčī* 'gunner' (Turk. *topçu*)
- (21) *samārat* (PL) 'pack-saddles' (Turk. *semer*)
parčayat (PL) 'pieces, parts' (Turk. *parça*)
- (24) *līsta* 'list' (Turk. *liste*)
- (25) *qawiše* 'dormitory' (Turk. *koğuş*)
- (26) *yazičiye* (PL) 'military clerks' (Turk. *yazıcı*)
- (28) *gšoḥalli* (< *g-šoḥanli*) 'it will be warm for me'

- (30) *‘āğaba* (introduces a question) (Turk. *acaba*)
- (31) *madām ki* ‘since’ (Turk. *madem ki*)
- (35) *əzən*, PL *əznat* ‘leave, furlough’ (Turk. *izin*)
- (38) *hāman* ‘immediately, at once’ (Turk. *hemen*)
taw (= *itāw*) ‘sit down!’
- (41) *öyleyse* (Turk.) ‘if so, in that case’
mə=škəl ‘how’ < **mən=šəkəl*
- (42) *rāste* (F) ‘right’ (Kurd. *rast*)
pōl ‘shoulder (blade)’ (Kurd. *pol*)
- (44) *ko* ‘go ahead!’
- (46) *akyam* ‘blackier’ (Arab. comparative of *Ṭuroyo komo*)
m-iḏe d- ‘because’
- (48) *zan* (= *əzzán*) ‘let’s go!’
qām ‘he got up’ (< *qayəm*)
- (49) *sarşale* ‘New Year’s Day’ (Kurd. *sersal*)
- (50) *lapkat* (PL) ‘gloves’ (Kurd. *lepik*)

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WAR AND FIELDWORK^{*}

Charles G. Häberl

Festschriften are by nature personal affairs, uniting personal contributions from scholars working in disparate fields and on different themes in tribute to a single person, a respected mentor and/or cherished colleague. I have been and continue to be inspired by Geoffrey Khan's example, as an eminent scholar, a generous mentor to his students, and a decent human being, and for that reason I hope that my readers will not object if I personalise my contribution to his *Festschrift*.

Although fieldworkers such as us labour to build linguistic corpora to serve as the foundations for the extraction, processing, and context-free presentation of grammatical data, these corpora never emerge in a vacuum. War and its attendant evils, such as famine, disease, and forced migration, in addition to other forms of ethnic cleansing, shape the experiences of the speakers of many endangered languages, and we, as fieldworkers, are knowingly or unknowingly shaped by such conflicts as well. Each vector in the series of influences and decisions that brings us to the

^{*} I would like to acknowledge the Ukrainian people, who graciously hosted me together with Geoffrey Khan and other Semitists at the National University Ostroh Academy during the summers of 2017 and 2018.

point where we find ourselves engaging with our language experts (or ‘informants’, to employ a term borrowed from the vocabulary of conflict)—including the states that educate us and the mass media that saturate us, the *almae matres* that nourish us and the disciplines in which we are reared, the institutions that employ us, the economies that convert our labour into financial value, and the societies that consume the products of that labour—reflects the influence of war.

To mitigate these influences, we generally adopt the persona of ‘a voice from nowhere’, whitewashing our scientific prose by following the example of those who have preceded us, but I submit that this simply conceals them from our audiences, rather than addressing them for their (and our own) benefit. To whitewash my own identity, I have discarded certain texts as too editorial to serve as grist for the context-free grammar mill while I was writing my *Neo-Mandaic Dialect of Khorramshahr*, including the present one, which concerns the consequences of one particular war. I am keenly aware that other wars have shaped critical aspects of my identity; for example, until shortly before I was born, my father served in the fire control crew of a nuclear-tipped Nike-Hercules surface to air missile battery at Fort Bliss, Texas, which naturally informed my childhood (and recently rekindled) phobia of a nuclear holocaust. Furthermore, what little I know about my family’s own heritage chiefly stems from the records our ancestors left from their own participation in various wars, starting with the French and Indian War (1754–1763), in which one such ancestor, a Delaware interpreter, was captured and tor-

tured to secure information concerning the efficacy of the small-pox-laden blankets that his British captors had previously gifted members of his nation, prefiguring the intelligence and germ warfare programmes of our own era (Stevens and Kent 1942, 100–3; Stevens, Kent, and Roland 1940, 291). Of course, I owe much of my own Middle Eastern intelligence to the Cold War-era Title VI National Resource Centre program at Harvard, which was a necessary, if perhaps not entirely sufficient, prerequisite to conduct this sort of fieldwork.

As it happens, at the time I recorded this present text, my own country was engaged in making war against the country of the largest Mandaean population at the time, Iraq, which set in motion the process by which Iraqi Mandaeans finally exchanged their ancient homeland for a global diaspora. This war, which the Bush administration cynically marketed to American and global publics alike as a kind of special police action, the unavoidable consequence of a brutal dictator's oppression of minorities within his own country, for which we would be greeted as liberators, as well as his development of certain unspecified 'weapons of mass destruction',¹ predictably upended life for these same minorities together with the larger Iraqi population. Even though the US-led invasion was enabled and materially supported through the participation of 48 countries, including the United Kingdom, it

¹ In one of history's great ironies, the scientists who constituted Iraq's defunct nuclear research program were protégés of the celebrated Mandaean physicist, Abdul Jabbar Abdullah (1911–1969), whom the Ba'athists deposed from his position as president of the University of Baghdad and jailed during their coup of February 1963.

not only remained deeply unpopular at home, but also nurtured a growing global grievance and even hostility towards Americans, both individually and collectively. While the United States and their allies accepted a small fraction of the refugees fleeing this conflict, they did so only grudgingly, and even today, some two decades later, millions of Iraqis remain displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance.²

I recorded this text during the Second Battle of Fallujah (7 November–23 December 2004), another ancient centre of Mandaean life in Iraq. It documents one small step in the process that eventually led to the present state of the Mandaean diaspora. Although Mandaic had already ceased to be a living language within Iraq during the time of E. Stefana Drower, the preeminent ethnographer of contemporary Mandaean life and English language translator of their literature, Iraqi and Iranian Mandaeans (such as my chief Mandaic language expert, ‘Abu Issa’ Nasser Sobbi) continue to be closely bound by ties of family and religion, if not language. Consequently, my fieldwork in the Flushing neighbourhood of New York City, conducted throughout the course of the

² Allow me to draw an obvious parallel between the US-led Coalition’s invasion of Iraq and the recent ‘special military operation’ of the Russian Federation and its ally the Republic of Belarus in Ukraine, which provides an immediate context for this contribution. The example of Iraq suggests that the long-term consequences of this war (for Ukrainians and Russians alike) yet remain unknown, but that they will likely be no less severe and potentially much greater. The cynical and ever-shifting narratives of phantom Ukrainian weapons programs, today promoted by Moscow and Beijing through their own state media and their cat’s paws abroad, indicate that some things never change.

Iraq war and its aftermath, was punctuated by increasingly lurid accounts of the suffering of Mandaean and other Iraqis during that war. These included senseless deaths due to the collapse of the Iraqi public health system, as well as the growing lawlessness that resulted in incidents such as the one herein recounted.

1.0. Prior Research

Mandaic is a moribund Neo-Aramaic language spoken by roughly two dozen families (no more than 50–70 individuals), who reside primarily in the Iranian city of Ahvāz, apart from other areas around the world in which Iranian Mandaeans have settled. In this contribution, I introduce a brief Mandaic text together with a translation and interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses.

Two of the surviving dialects of modern Mandaic have thus far been adequately, if not extensively documented: those of Ahvāz (Macuch 1965a; 1965b; 1989; 1993; Mutzafi 2014) and Khorramshahr (Häberl 2009). These dialects are mutually intelligible, such that speakers of either dialect deny any substantive differences between the two. The now extinct Mandaic dialect of Baṣra is represented by the Mandaic column of a polyglot glossary, which was produced in the mid-seventeenth century by a Carmelite missionary whom Roberta Borghero (2000, 318) has identified as Matteo di San Giuseppe. Both Theodor Nöldeke (1875, xxv) and Rudolf Macuch (1965a) consulted this *Glossarium* in the preparation of their grammars, and its Mandaic contents were incorporated into Drower and Macuch's 1963 dictionary.

While some samples of modern Mandaic were collected and published by Nicholas Siouffi (1880, 159–70) and Stefana

Drower,³ and the colophons of Mandaic manuscripts often reflect modern Mandaic features in archaising garb,⁴ no complete modern Mandaic text appeared in print before the beginning of the twentieth century, when Jacques de Morgan published facsimiles of five such texts in vol. 5 of his *Mission scientifique en Perse*.⁵ The last few decades have seen a marked increase in the number of modern Mandaic texts available to scholarship and a descriptive grammar.⁶

2.0. The Present Text

I collected the present text on 7 November 2004 from my chief Mandaic language expert, ‘Abu Issa’ Nasser Sobbi (13 March 1924–22 December 2018) at his home in Flushing, Queens, as a parenthetical aside within the context of many other texts (some of which were eventually published in Häberl 2009). Although it is much shorter than most of those texts (containing only 73 words), it differs from them in some important respects, being considerably more spontaneous and topical. Nasser Sobbi was a gifted raconteur and could therefore dispose of a large stock of personal anecdotes, folk tales, and jokes, but, as invaluable as

³ E.g., Drower (1937, 61), a short ‘folk-song’ in modern Mandaic alongside a classicising ‘literary’ version.

⁴ Morgenstern 2018. For a survey of the other manuscript sources for modern Mandaic, see also Morgenstern 2015.

⁵ De Morgan 1904, 271–286. The texts collected by de Morgan were subsequently transliterated and translated in Macuch 1989, 163–191.

⁶ For the most recent word on the subject, see Häberl (f.c.).

such contributions were, it must be admitted that they had become somewhat streamlined through multiple retellings and, therefore, lacked the qualities of spontaneous speech. By contrast, there is nothing rehearsed or streamlined about this brief account, and even a cursory listening to the recording⁷ cannot but reveal the raw emotions that frame it.

Nasser Sobbi delivered the text at an average pace of four or five syllables per second, but at times his speech is decidedly allegro. At no point appears the morpheme -ʕ, which I have elsewhere described as the ‘nominal augment’ (Häberl 2009, 35 *et passim*) and which designates the free, non-incorporated form of the noun. In one relative clause, he swallows several syllables. Consequently, the text challenged not only my ability to interpret it, but also that of the younger generation of Mandaean.⁸

3.0. Transcription System

In transcribing this text, I employ a modified form of the system I devised for Häberl (2009) and amended following Mutzafi (2014), which I elaborate in the tables below.

⁷ A digital audio recording is available at Humanities Commons: <https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:44979/>, last accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸ I shared this recording with Mr Behnam Dorraji of San Antonio, Texas, who provided invaluable assistance with the decipherment of several words.

Table 1: Consonant inventory

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Stops and Affricates										
Voiceless	<i>p</i>			<i>t</i>	<i>č</i>		<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>		ʔ
Voiced	<i>b</i>			<i>d</i>	<i>j</i>		<i>g</i>			
Emphatic				<i>ṭ</i>						
Fricatives										
Voiceless		<i>f</i>	<i>t̪</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>			<i>x</i>	<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
Voiced		<i>v</i>		<i>z</i>				<i>ġ</i>	ʕ	
Emphatic				<i>ṣ</i>						
Sonorants										
Nasal	<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>						
Lateral				<i>l</i>						
Apical				<i>r</i>						
Approximant	<i>w</i>					<i>y</i>				

There are 28 phonemic consonantal segments, comprising eight stops, nine fricatives, and six sonorants, all of which are inherited, and five loan-phonemes: the labiodental fricative *v*, the post-alveolar affricates *č* and *j*, and the pharyngeal fricatives ʕ and *ħ*, which are found only in vocabulary of foreign origin, particularly Arabic and Persian. A few Arabic loan words also contain the glottal stop ʔ and two pharyngealised segments (a voiced alveolar stop *ḍ* and a voiced alveolar fricative *ḏ*), but they are marginal within the broader phonemic inventory.⁹

⁹ I would describe the break between vowels in phrases such as *ešmi Anis* ‘his name is Anees’ as hiatus, rather than introduce a phonemic glottal stop in such contexts, according to traditional Semitological conventions, since vowels are often elided in precisely this context.

Table 2: Vowel inventory

	Front	Central	Back
Close	<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>
Mid	<i>e</i>	<i>ə</i>	<i>o</i>
Open	<i>a</i>		<i>ɔ</i>

The Mandaic vowel system consists of seven distinct vowels, of which six (*i*, *u*, *e*, *o*, *a*, and *ɔ*) are principal phonemes, and one (*ə*) is marginal. These are distinguished by quality, rather than quantity. Three of the principal vowels, the ‘tense’ vowels *i*, *u*, and *ɔ*, are lengthened in open accented syllables to [i:], [u:], and [ɔ:] or [ɒ:]. The other three principal vowels, the ‘lax’ vowels *o*, *e*, and *a*, appear only exceptionally in open accented syllables. The vowel *o* is realised as [o] in open syllables and [o] or [ʌ] in closed syllables. The vowel *e* is realised as [e] in open syllables and [ɛ] or [ɪ] in closed syllables. For its part, *a* is realised as [ɑ] in closed accented syllables, and [a] or [æ] elsewhere. Schwa (*ə*) has the widest allophonic variation of all the vowels; it is regularly fronted, backed, raised, or lowered in harmony with the vowel of the following syllable. The principal vowels also form six diphthongs: *ey*, *ew*, *ay*, *aw*, *ɔy*, and *ɔw*. Of these, the diphthongs *ay* and *aw* have collapsed in all accented syllables in the dialects of Ahvāz and Khorramshahr, apart from those in words of foreign origin and where *aw* reflects the reflex of historical *ab*, e.g., *gawrɔn* ‘men’.

I indicate word stress only when it cannot be predicted. Generally, it falls upon a tense vowel within a closed syllable, and its placement is conditioned by the final syllable. Any final

syllable that is closed and contains a tense vowel automatically receives the stress, e.g., *Bağdód* ‘Baghdad’. If the final is either open or contains a lax vowel, then the stress falls on the penultimate syllable in words of two syllables, e.g., *étmal* ‘yesterday’ and *şótni* ‘we heard’, or the antepenultimate syllable in words of three or more syllables, e.g., *gaţélnəxon* ‘I will kill you’, provided that either syllable is closed or contains a tense vowel. Otherwise, the stress falls on the final syllable, e.g., *qamó* ‘before’, *əhāw* ‘he gave’. Several morphemes take primary word stress, such as the negative morpheme *lá-*, which invariably carries the primary stress, e.g., *láhawlonni* ‘they didn’t give him’; in such instances or when loanwords retain the stress from their source languages, I indicate its position with an acute accent, e.g., *aziyát* ‘distress’.

4.0. New Vocabulary

Although the text is short, it contains several new lexemes not previously attested in published texts:

kəlw ‘to’, a by-form of *əlw* ‘to, about’ (cf. *qəməzabnéen əlwu* and *qəməzabnéen kəlwu* ‘we sell to them’), possibly a compound of *ekkə* ‘there’ (cf. Macuch 1993, 404 s.v. *kæ* ‘dort[hin]’) and *əlw*, in which case it has explicitly locative force, e.g. *ezgə kəlw tel* ‘he went to a hill’.

mohlát ‘deadline’, Arabic *muhla* ‘term, stint’ via Persian *mohlat* ‘a delay granted for an appointed time or term’.

rahə ‘wd’ ‘to give up (e.g. a weapon)’, from Persian *rahā kardān* id.

səlhə ‘weapon’ from Arabic *silāh* id.

vaxim ‘severe, critical’, from Arabic *waḥīm* ‘troubled in the stomach’ via Persian *vaḥīm* ‘critical’.

vaz ‘situation’, Arabic *waḍʿ* via Persian *vazʿ* id.

5.0. Interlinear Glossing

I have provided interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses according to the Leipzig rules,¹⁰ with a few minor modifications to conserve space and represent the morphosyntax of the text with greater precision. Additionally, where the running text indicates apocopated bound forms by means of the undertie, e.g., *mohlati_̣k səlḅhi raḥɔ_̣dli* ‘the time to give up his weapon’, the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses reflect their unbound forms, e.g., *mohlati ke səlḅhi raḥɔ əwadli*. For the most part, the category labels I employ are either those recommended by the Max Planck Institute or options proceeding from its guidelines, such as shortening SG to S, PL to P, but I introduce here the following labels, most of which are commonly met elsewhere in the literature:

DO	direct object
GEN	genitive morpheme (on loanwords)
INDF	indefinite morpheme
PN	proper noun
POS	predicative possession
REL	relative pronoun
RES	restrictive relative clause

¹⁰ See <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>.

6.0. The Text and Translation

(1) *Eṭmal šotni, qamō čor-pien ruz, ya Mandōyi gōw Bağdād, ešmi Anis, ešmi Layt ebbər Anis ebbər Ḥamur, qanōyi hāwō, dahw ehli.* (2) *Daššon kəlōwi, səlḥi ham hāwōli, (3) lāhawlonni mohlati k səlḥi rahō dli.*¹¹ (4) *Geṭlonni, daron dahwōni, daron pərahōni, u šewqonni m-ekax.* (5) *Mandayōn ekax, gawrōn, genz aziyāt-non kol yum.* (6) *Doktorō-du faqirō, lāqallen kəlōw āwōdō, (7) qanayōn geš lāqallen bōzōr, waxti vaz elli genza vaxim-ye.*¹² (8) *Lāqyōday moyye āwden. Bas an qəmbarēx mōray əmzaherlu.* (9) *Hayyi, Mōray, u Mandō d-Hayyi əmzaherlu.*

(1) Yesterday we heard four or five days ago a Mandaean in Baghdad, whose name is Anees, whose name is Laith Anees Hamour,¹³ was a jeweller, he has some gold. (2) They came into his place, he also had a weapon, (3) they didn't give him the time¹⁴ to give up his weapon. (4) They killed him, they took his gold jewelry,¹⁵ they took his money,¹⁶ and from there they left him.

¹¹ An apocopated form of *səlḥi rahō āwadli* 'he gave up his weapon'.

¹² Cf. Persian *vaqti vaz' xayli vaxim ast id.*

¹³ The victim's name is a patronymic consisting of a personal name, the father's personal name, and the grandfather's personal name. Laith 'lion' and Anees 'close friend' are common personal names, marked as neither Muslim nor Mandaean. Hamour is the brown spotted reef cod (*Epinephelus chlorostigma*). Such names are characteristic of Mandaeans of a certain generation; cf. the Mandaean personal name Shabout (*Šabuṭ*), literally *Cyprinus carpio*, the common carp.

¹⁴ Lit. 'a deadline', i.e., a countdown to surrender his weapon.

¹⁵ Lit. 'his golds'.

¹⁶ Lit. 'his coins' (Ottoman Turkish *para*).

- (5) The Mandaeans there, the men, are very distressed every day.
 (6) Their poor doctors, they don't go to work. (7) None of the jewellers go to the market when the situation is very dire. (8) I don't know what they'll do, I only pray that God protect them.
 (9) May Life, God, and Manda d'Hayyi protect them.¹⁷

7.0. Interlinear

- (1) *eṭmal ʃət-ni qamɔ ʒər pien ruz*
 yesterday hear.PFV-1P before 4 5 day
ya Mandəy-i gəw Baḡdād Ø ešm-i Anis
 a Mandaean-INDF in PN REL name-3MS PN
ešm-i Layt ebbər Anis ebbər Ḥamur
 name-3MS PN son PN son PN
qanəy-i həwɔ-Ø Ø dahw ehl-i
 jeweler-INDF be.PFV-3MS REL gold POS-3MS
- (2) *dašš-on kəlɔw-i selɔh ham həwɔ-Ø = l-i*
 enter.PFV-3P to-3MS weapon also be.PFV-3MS = DO-3MS
- (3) *lá-haw-l-onni mohlat-i ke*
 NEG = give.PFV = DO-3P-3MS deadline-RES RES.REL
selɔh-i rahɔ əwad-Ø = l-i
 weapon-3MS free make.PFV-3MS = DO-3MS

¹⁷ Nasser Sobbi maintains that 'Life, God, and Manda d'Hayyi' is not a Trinitarian formula in the Christian sense, but rather a series of three names denoting the same being. The word glossed 'God' here is literally 'my Lord', but it is functionally equivalent to the English proper noun God.

- (4) *geṭl-onn-i dər-on dahw-ən-i dər-on*
 kill.PFV-3P-3MS take.PFV-3P gold-PL-3MS take.PFV-3P
pərah-ən-i u šewq-onn-i m = ekax
 money-PL-3MS and leave.PFV-3P-3MS from = there
- (5) *manday-ən ekax gawr-ən genz aziyāt = non*
 Mandaean-PL there men-P very harm = 3P
kol yum
 every day
- (6) *doktor-š = d-u faqir-š lá-q = all-en*
 doctor-P-GEN-3P poor-P NEG = IND = go.IPFV-3P
kəlwə əwədo
 to work
- (7) *qanay-ən geš lá = q = all-en bəzór*
 jeweler-P all NEG = IND = go.IPFV-3P market
waxti vaz elli genzi vaxim = ye
 time situation REL very severe = COP.3MS
- (8) *lá = q = yəḏ-ay mo = yye əwd-en bas an*
 NEG = IND = know-1S what = 3MS do.IPFV-3P only 1S
qəmbaréx-Ø mər-ay əmzaher-Ø = l-u
 IND = pray.IPFV-1MS lord-1S protect.IPFV-3MS = DO-3P
- (9) *Hayyi Mər-ay u Mandə d-Hayyi*
 PN lord-1S and PN
əməzaher-Ø = l-u
 protect.IPFV-3MS = DO-3P

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INDEFINITENESS MARKING: NENA AND ITS AREAL AND SEMITIC PARALLELS*

Dorota Molin

The chief interest of the present contribution is the particle¹ *xa* in North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (henceforth ‘NENA’). It is shown that its usage is more advanced than previously described. Though originally from the numeral ‘one’ *ḥaḏ* (MS), this particle has since acquired other functions. This includes certain types of indefiniteness marking. As such, it is most often analysed in NENA grammars as a discourse-topical marker, much like ‘a certain’ in English (see further, below). For instance, in Khan’s treatment of C. Urmi,² *xa* is said to convey “individuation or salience,” being used for referents that “often play an important role in the subsequent context” (Khan 2016, II:1). A textbook example of

* I thank Masoud Mohammadirad for providing or verifying the Iranian data included here.

¹ Use of the term ‘article’ in this study is reserved for an obligatory indefiniteness marker (at least in the singular), much like English *a(n)*. The terms ‘marker’ and ‘particle’, conversely, are used for less grammaticalised indefinite morphemes.

² This article follows the common convention of using ‘C. (place name)’ for a NENA variety spoken in a given location by Christians, and ‘J. (place name)’ for a Jewish dialect of the place in question.

this type of usage is given in (1) below. It comes from a narrative text in C. Zakho—the NENA variety in focus in this study. The example appears at the opening of the story, and *xa* introduces the region where the story begins. The region, therefore, is a key element in the story, despite not being an animate discourse topic:

- (1) *gu xa- mánṭaqa šəmm-aw Sāmàna.*¹
 in one region.FS name.MS-her Samana
 ‘(The story began) in a certain region [whose] name is Samana’ (lit. ‘in a certain region its name Samana’) (‘The Bridge of Dalale’,³ 78, §2)

In general, the proliferation of the indefinite particle in NENA discourse is inextricably linked to language contact. Indefiniteness is also marked in the neighbouring Iranian languages, Kurdish and Gorani,⁴ as pointed out by Noorlander (2014, 214–18) in his article on NENA–Kurdish convergence. While Khan’s treatments of *xa* in his grammars (e.g., of the aforementioned C. Urmi variety) emphasises dialect-specific features of the indefinite particle, Noorlander focuses on parallels with Kurdish and—therefore—on areas of crosslinguistic convergence.

³ See below fn. 20.

⁴ Several scholars (e.g., Geoff Haig) have hypothesised that Gorani—now spoken in a few pockets in north-eastern Iraq and in western Iran—was once more widespread in the region, and interacted closely with Kurdish and Aramaic. The ERC project at the University of Cambridge (ALHOME; 2021–2025; PI Geoffrey Khan) is currently exploring this issue.

The great merit of Khan's approach—exemplified by many of his voluminous and fine-grained NENA grammars—is the implicit recognition that every language or its dialectal variety is a linguistic system in its own right. Such an individual system, therefore, should not be forced into pre-existing generalisations in order to prove hypotheses about universal language-processing mechanisms, or about typological trends. On the other hand, Noorlander's study aptly demonstrates that it is often language contact which provides the main trigger for change in NENA. In other words, all NENA varieties are part of an interconnected, tight-knit, linguistically complex area of West Asia.⁵

As is so often the case, however, change—especially in complex structural processes, such as grammaticalisation—is incremental (cf. Hopper and Closs Traugott 2003). Though contact with Kurdish (and Gorani) is likely the main catalyst for the spread of indefiniteness marking in NENA, this does not automatically imply a complete functional correspondence across the systems at any given point in the languages' histories. In light of this, the present contribution treats the indefinite marker as undergoing a gradual grammaticalisation process, during which the functional scope of the particle is gradually increased. In line with this approach, I map the functional scope of *xa* vis-à-vis typical extensions of indefiniteness marking and its expected grammaticalisation pathways in order to determine how far along it has travelled.

⁵ For this area, see further Haig and Khan (2019) and the references therein.

I focus, for the most part, on the Christian and Jewish dialects of north-western Iraq (Zakho and Dohok), where *xa* is quite advanced. Though this particle is not yet an obligatory indefinite article, it does tend to serve as a specificity marker. What is more, it is even occasionally used with non-specific referents, which is considered an advanced type of indefiniteness marking. In these NENA varieties, therefore, *xa* covers several functions, not just the discourse-topical one, though usually only this function is discussed in existing NENA grammars.⁶

1.0. Indefiniteness (and Definiteness) Marking in General Typology and in the West Asia Linguistic Area

As mentioned above, the NENA indefinite particle *xa* originates in the numeral ‘one’ (MS *ḥaḍ* and FS *ḥdā*).⁷ This historical origin notwithstanding, a phonetic difference between the indefinite particle and the numeral tends to hold in the synchronic varieties. The indefinite particle most commonly behaves like a proclitic, forming a single phonological word with what follows, and

⁶ E.g., C. Urmi in north-western Iran (Khan 2016, II:1) or C. Barwar in north-western Iraq (Khan 2008a, I: 450–52). The findings presented here thus call for a closer crossdialectal investigation of *xa* to determine whether the degree of its grammaticalisation varies crossdialectally or whether the treatment of *xa* in other varieties should also be broadened.

⁷ The inflection for gender in the singular is optionally preserved to date in some NENA varieties, such as C. Umra d-Shish (Noorlander in this volume) or C. Barwar (Khan 2008a, I:450), both north-western Iraq, adjacent to the Turkish border.

is thus transcribed here with the sign ‘=’. By contrast, the numeral ‘one’ receives word, and even nuclear, stress (Napiorkowska 2015), as it is commonly part of the pragmatic comment (i.e., the assertion).⁸

Crosslinguistically, the numeral ‘one’ is an extremely common source for indefinite morphemes (e.g., Givón 1981),⁹ encountered also in Kurdish and Gorani.

A convenient representation of the grammaticalisation process from ‘one’ may be found in Geist (2013), and is represented in Figure 1 below. Geist’s chart is a collation of the models by Heine (1997; top part of figure) and Givón (1981; bottom part of figure):

Figure 1: Grammaticalisation of the indefinite marker from ‘one’ based on Heine (1997) and Givón (1981):

1. numeral	>	2. presentative marker	>	3. specificity marker	>	4. non-specific marker	>	5. generalised article
I. numeral	>	II. indefinite determiner			>	III. indefinite article		

In the first stage of development according to Heine (Stage 2; in Givón, ‘II indefinite determiner’), the numeral acquires a discourse-pragmatic function: it marks given referents as newly-introduced to discourse (like in the sentence ‘There was a cer-

⁸ Napiorkowska’s data come from the C. Diyana-Zariwaw in north-eastern Iraq. I have found similar tendencies for the Jewish dialects in north-western Iraq.

⁹ For a global map, see ‘Indefinite Article’ at WALS online (Dryer 2013a).

tain...'). By definition, therefore, this presentative usage coincides with specific¹⁰ referents, but importantly, the semantic criterion of specificity is not the main one at this stage. It is only during Stage 3 that the pragmatic criterion of presentativity is weakened. However, the semantic scope remains restricted: the marker is used for specific referents (i.e., the speaker has a particular entity in mind). To illustrate with the English indefinite article *a(n)*, if it were still restricted to Stage 3, the example in (2a) would have to be read as having a specific doctor in mind. Thus, the response could only be (2b), and not (2c):

(2a) *Anna wants to marry a doctor.*

(2b) *I know who it is.*

(2c) *But there are no candidates yet.*

Limited indefiniteness marking—of topical constituents—is also attested in some Slavic languages, which generally lack a more developed indefinite marker.¹¹ Thus, in Polish, the adjective *pewny* 'a certain' optionally encodes presentative (Stage 2) indefiniteness and is especially typical of animate or other highly topical entities, features especially typical of (past perfective) narrative.

Only in Stage 4 is the criterion of the specificity bleached, so that the morpheme can be used even when a specific referent is not in sight, as in the construal of (2a) presupposing the response in (2c), above.

¹⁰ In Givón (1981), 'referential' is found in place of 'specific.'

¹¹ Though see Geist (2013) on the indefinite (specificity) marker in Bulgarian.

In his grammar of C. Urmi, Khan analyses *xa* as a marker of “individuation or salience” (Khan 2016, II:1) that tends to mark new yet key discourse referents. Thus, the primary function of the particle according to Khan corresponds to Stage 2. (presentativity marker). While ‘individuation’ in principle includes *all* specific referents (even those that lack discourse salience), Khan’s discussion does tend to focus on discourse-prominent referents (Khan 2016, II:1–4). This seems to imply, therefore, that ‘Stage 3’ usage is non-existent or extremely infrequent. In the north-western Iraqi dialects of Dohok and Zakho, by contrast, such general indefiniteness occurs, and is not uncommon (see below).

This general model notwithstanding, the grammaticalisation of indefiniteness often remains ‘incomplete’ (Heine 1997, 68–70; Lyons 1999), to use the perspective of prescriptive diachrony. In other words, the completion of the process presented above, in Figure 1, often remains a possibility—a likely direction of future change, if it were to occur. Thus, in many languages, the marking of indefiniteness is not obligatory in all contexts. First, indefiniteness marking is often restricted to referents which are specific. In the West Asia region, this is usually assumed for Kurdish, though this is not based on systematic research.¹²

Another common limitation of indefinite markers crosslinguistically concerns plural and mass nominals; their indefinite encoding is statistically much less likely than that of countable

¹² Geoffrey Haig (p.c., March 2022). In fact, preliminary elicitation suggests that non-specific reference is also possible. It seems likely that some varieties of Kurdish would indeed allow this, especially in light of the presence of this feature in the NENA varieties discussed below.

singular entities. English, for example, is, on the one hand, advanced in the sense that *a(n)* is obligatory with non-specific singular referents. On the other hand, indefinite encoding of plural and mass nouns (with *some*) is not obligatory in all contexts (Lyons 1999, 89);

As regards definiteness, while most NENA varieties do not possess a full-fledged definite article, they do frequently employ (phonetically reduced forms of) demonstrative pronouns for some types of definiteness. Most importantly, demonstratives are often used for *pragmatic* definiteness—to encode discourse-old referents (Khan 2008b; Doron and Khan 2016). However, they have not yet been extended to referents that are definite apart from their discourse context, such as by virtue of being unique (e.g., ‘the sun’ etc.).¹³ As such, demonstratives are not treated here as definite articles (i.e., fully grammaticalised definiteness markers). Using demonstrative pronouns to mark definiteness in some contexts is common in languages that lack a dedicated definite morpheme. In addition to demonstratives, all thus far known NENA varieties possess a way of differentiating definite

¹³ The situation is different in the Jewish NENA varieties east of the Zab River (cf. Mutzafi 2008), which have borrowed a definite morpheme from Kurdish (Khan 2008b), most commonly *-aké*. Interestingly, however, the Kurdish morphosyntactic patterns accompanying the definite suffix are not replicated in their entirety in these NENA languages (Noorlander 2014, 217–18). Full-fledged definiteness marking also occurs in ʿTuroyo (e.g. Jastrow, 2005, Waltisberg 2016). ʿTuroyo is Central Neo-Aramaic, spoken in the Mardin province of south-eastern Turkey (ʿTūr ‘Abdin), and represents NENA’s closest relative in the Neo-Aramaic family.

and indefinite objects. Differential object marking in NENA (Coghill 2014; Noorlander 2021, e.g., 129–30) targets discourse-topical referents which are also (pragmatically) definite.

The marking of indefiniteness and, partly, also definiteness is a feature of many languages in West Asia, including northern Iraq. As previously mentioned, indefiniteness is marked in north-western Iranian languages, which have for at least centuries been in contact with Eastern Aramaic. In Northern Kurdish, definite nominals are unmarked, while indefinite ones are marked with the suffix *-ak* and its dialectal variants. Central Kurdish and Gorani also mark indefinite nominals, e.g., *-(y)êk* in Central Kurdish.¹⁴ Unlike its Northern counterpart and NENA, however, Central Kurdish and Gorani also mark definite nominals. Central Kurdish, for instance, uses the affix *-aka*, which immediately follows the stem and is inflected for number.¹⁵ The lack of a fully grammaticalised definite marker in Northern Kurdish notwithstanding, these linguistic varieties do use demonstrative pronouns anaphorically (Masoud Mohammadirad, p.c.), as is the case in NENA and in many other languages.

¹⁴ In conservative Gorani varieties, such as Takht, the indefinite affix on nominative singular forms is *-ê(w)* (MS) and *-êwa* (FS), while the numeral ‘one’ is *ya(k)*. Apparently, the Gorani indefinite marker represents an earlier form of the numeral, while the synchronic ‘one’ is a Kurdish loan (cf. the West Middle Iranian data in Windfuhr 2009).

¹⁵ See Haig and Khan (2019, e.g., 16–17) and the references therein. A collaborative research project on the origins and typology of definiteness marking in Central Kurdish is currently being carried out by Geoffrey Haig, Maryam Nourzaei, and Masoud Mohammadirad.

On the global scale, the scenario in Northern Kurdish and NENA is the less common one. If a language marks only one, but not the other, it is more often definiteness which is encoded, as opposed to only indefiniteness.¹⁶ Languages with only indefinite encoding do occur, however, despite claims in the classical typological literature that it is unlikely.¹⁷

2.0. Advanced Indefiniteness Marking in NENA: Christian and Jewish Varieties of North-western Iraq

The previous characterisations of *xa* as a marker of prominent topics notwithstanding, the function of this particle extends to other areas also, at least in some NENA varieties. I have identified this more general usage in the corpora C. and J. Zakho and in C. Dohok, which the following section focuses on.¹⁸ The data presented below are taken from the narrative material published in

¹⁶ For instance, WALS online lists 45 languages with only the indefinite marker, and 98 with only the definite one (Dryer 2013a; 2013b).

¹⁷ For instance, Heine (1997, 69) writes that “if a language has a grammaticalized indefinite article, it is likely to also have a definite article.” Based on his sample of 108 languages, he reports that 5 percent of these languages only encode indefiniteness (1997, 70). Likely, the percentage of ‘indefinite only’ languages would be higher, if all the languages now available in WALS were considered.

¹⁸ There are also examples of advanced indefinite marking in the C. Umra d-Shish material in this volume; see the text in the chapter by Noorlander (§3.0). I thank Paul Noorlander for pointing out those examples to me.

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq (Khan et al. 2022).¹⁹

2.1. Presentative Uses of *xa*

In the C. Zakho story of 1600 tokens, there are 23 clear cases of *xa* used as an indefinite marker, including predicative usage.²⁰ In four of these, *xa* introduces specific new referents to discourse, which fits with the category of presentative marker. In many other cases, however, the criterion of presentativity, and even of specificity, does not hold, *xa* being used instead as a specific or even non-specific marker. The presentative usage (Stage 2) has been illustrated in (1) above, and is exemplified again by the examples in (3) and (4) below:

- (3) *xa*- *muhandəs* *suray-a* *šəmm-u* *Tòma*.
 one engineer.MS Syriac_Christian-MS name.MS-his Toma
 ‘one’ [category] [identity]
 ‘A certain Syriac-Christian engineer [whose] (lit. his) name
 was Toma.’ (NENA, C. Zakho, ‘BD’, 80, §7)

¹⁹ For C. Zakho: ‘The Bridge of Dalale’, abbreviated here ‘BD’; C. Dohok: ‘A Woman Builds Her Home’ (‘WBHH’) and J. Zakho: *As Precious as Salt* (‘PS’). Please also note that the original title of this story is ‘The Lazy Boy and the King’s Daughter’. The examples from these varieties are accompanied with the page number, followed by the paragraph number (e.g., ‘301, §31’).

²⁰ This is attested elsewhere in NENA; see, for instance, C. Urmi (Khan 2016, II:6), example (41), and the discussion below.

- (4) *xa kalwa u=kòme =wa.*
one dog.MS and-black.MS COP.PST.3SG
 [category] [attribute]
 ‘(He had at home) **a certain** dog, and it was black.’ (NENA, C. Zakho, ‘BD’, 88, §31)

These examples neatly illustrate the prototypical presentative function discussed here; in all three, the referent introduced by *xa* is subsequently described in greater detail, as represented by the tag in (3)–(4). Thus, in (1) *xa-mántaqa*, above, and in *xa-mūhandəs suraya* (3), *xa* is followed by a noun that identifies the category of the referent in question—‘region’ in (1) and ‘engineer’ in (3)—which, in turn, is followed by a proper name that identifies the referent (*Samana* and *Toma*, respectively). Often in presentative contexts, *xa* thus effectively functions as a cataphoric relative clause (e.g., ‘a certain Syriac-Christian engineer [whose] name was...’).

2.2. Non-presentative Uses of *xa*: Specific and Non-specific Marker

In other instances, however, the presentative function cannot be shown to apply. In example (5), for instance, *xa* introduces the referent ‘window’, which is not a key topic in the story:

- (5) *wəd-le xa= šəbbāk ʔal-aw.*
make.PFV-3MS one window.MS for-her
 ‘He made **a** window for her.’ (NENA, C. Zakho, ‘BD’, 90, §38)

In this sentence, *xa* introduces a specific entity, but this referent is not explicitly resumed in the story, and its character and identity are left undescribed. As a result, the phrase *xa šəbbāk* could

not be rendered in idiomatic English as ‘a certain window (that was...), but must be translated simply as ‘a window’. In this instance, therefore, *xa* is bleached of its original presentative function, and simply encodes an entity that is specific, yet (pragmatically) indefinite.²¹

The semantic change of *xa* is even more striking in the following examples, which lack a specific referent altogether:

- (6) *ʿab-e-wa* *ʿawəd-Ø* *xa=* *gəšra,*¹ *xa=* *tawəšəl.*¹
 want-3MS-PST make-3MS one bridge.MS one connection.MS
 ‘(And the ruler) wanted to build a bridge, a connection [over the river].’ (NENA, C. Zakho ‘BD’, 78, §3)

At this point in the narrative, the bridge is simply an idea, and we know nothing about its proposed construction process or design. So even though a bridge is later built, at this point in the story, there is as yet no specific bridge or specific idea of a bridge to refer to. This instance of *xa* could perhaps be rendered in informal English with ‘some [kind of a]’, thus ‘[the ruler] wanted to build some [kind of a] bridge, some [kind of a] connection’. This usage would arguably imply a lack of specificity in the present, but a desire for eventual concretisation.

Another non-specific use of *xa* occurs in the following sentence:

²¹ At first glance, one may wish to take this instance of *xa* as the numeral, i.e., ‘he built [only] one window for her.’ This is unlikely, however, since *xa* does not receive (lexical or nuclear) stress here, being instead cliticised to the noun which it modifies.

- (7) Ø-ʔawd-ət-li xa= ḥāl,¹
 Ø-make-2MS-O.1MS one solution
 ‘(I ask you) to provide a solution [for me].’ (NENA, C. Zakho ‘BD’, 86, §27)

This sentence comes from the prayer in which the builder asks God for a solution to his dire situation. So, no solution exists, either in reality or in the builder’s mind; he does not suggest a specific plan with which God should save him.

A similar situation obtains in the neighbouring dialects, Christian and Jewish. For instance, the following J. Zakho examples in (8)–(9) show that *xa* has reached Stage 3 (non-presentative specificity marker) and, in (10), even Stage 4 (the non-specific marker):

- (8) ʔuz-la-la xa= sùkka qam- bany-a-la.
 Make.PFV-3FS-O.3FS one tent.FS PFV- build-FS-O.3FS
 ‘(Quick, quick,) she made herself a tent, she build it.’
 (NENA, J. Zakho, ‘PS’, 266, §36)

The referent ‘a tent’ is specific, but is neither an animate discourse topic nor mentioned later on. In other words, its role in the story is not significant in any way. The same situation (specificity, but no further discourse significance) applies to example (9):

- (9) hi-le dmix-a xa= tèʔna.
 COP.DEIX-3MS sleep.RES.PTCP-MS one fig-tree
 ‘Look, he’s sleeping under a fig-tree.’ (NENA, J. Zakho, ‘PS’, 256, §3)

The example in (10) has a non-specific indefinite marker. It contains a calque from Modern Hebrew.²² Modern Hebrew, however, only has a Stage 2 (or at most Stage 3) indefinite marker, as shown below. Consequently, such a marker would not be used in the source construction. Instead, the indefinite *xa* in the following sentence is an internal feature of the J. Zakho dialect, used here in a metaphorical, non-specific way:

- (10) *b-oz-áni xa= ^Hpinà.^H*
 FUT-make-1FS **one** corner.FS
 ‘I’ll build myself **a** home (lit. **a** corner).’ (NENA, J. Zakho
 (‘PS’, 258, §9)

Similar cases of Stage 4 (non-specific) indefiniteness marking also feature in the dialects spoken in the nearby city of Dohok, as illustrated here for the Christian variety:

- (11) *s-e zwun xa= xmàṭa.*
 go.IMP-FS buy.IMP.SG **one** needle.FS
 ‘Go buy **a** needle (i.e., **a** needle which you will find and choose).’ (NENA, C. Dohok, ‘WBHH’, 250, §16)²³
- (12) *b-yaw-ən -nax ta xa= fāqira.*
 FUT-give-1MS -O.2FS to **one** poor.MS
 ‘I will give you to **a** poor man (i.e., **a** poor man whom I am yet to choose for you).’ (NENA, C. Dohok, ‘WBHH’, 236, §4)

²² E.g., ‘*aṣiti-li pina* ‘I made myself [a] corner’ or more typically, *maṣati-li pina ḥama* ‘I found myself [a] warm corner’, meaning ‘I found a home, a suitable place for myself.’

²³ As with the example in (5), the reading ‘**one** needle’ is possible, but unlikely. There is nothing in the context to suggest that the speaker would need to quantify the number of items necessary, and *xa* does not receive (lexical or nuclear) stress.

All of these examples concern singular entities. When it comes to plural and mass referents, indefiniteness becomes a more complex matter (e.g., Heine 1997, 11–12), especially as it relates to individuation and specificity vis-à-vis a (sometimes implicit) whole. Consequently, indefiniteness marking of plurals is not studied here in detail, though a general observation can be made. In NENA, as in many other languages (cf. Lyons 1999, 89; Heine 1997, 66–67), indefiniteness marking of plural and mass entities is less frequent than that of countable singular referents. In the C. Zakho material studied, there is one possible case, though the construction could also be interpreted as a noun with the adjective ‘(an)other’.

2.3. Predicative Use of *xa*

A final remark about indefinite *xa* due here concerns its predicative-attributive use, which occurs in many NENA varieties. For instance, Khan (2016, II:6) has noted its occurrence in C. Urmi,²⁴ where the main role of *xa* is said to be presentative, used for specific referents. This description notwithstanding, attributive predicates make an assertion about a *type* or an *attribute*, rather than identifying a specific entity in the real world:

- (13) *víyyə-lə* *xa-* *jvankə* ⁺*mətya*.
 become.PFV-3MS **one** young_man.MS mature.MS
 ‘one’ [category] [attribute]

‘He became a mature young man.’ (NENA, C. Urmi, Khan 2016, II:6)

²⁴ For a C. Zakho example, see, ‘BD’, 92, §41: ‘*ad -ile xa* ^A*əşura tarixiya*’^A ‘It is a historical legend’.

Such usages also demonstrate that the NENA *xa* has moved beyond marking new discourse topics. Polish and Modern Hebrew—which mark only presentative indefiniteness—would not use the indefinite marker in sentences such as (13) above. In NENA, the two usages of *xa* do have some parallels, however, which likely facilitated the extension of *xa* to predicates. Thus, in both (3) and (13) above, *xa* is followed by category nouns (respectively, *muhandəs suraya* ‘Syriac-Christian engineer’ and *jvankā* ‘young man’), which in turn are immediately followed by a more specific attribute—⁺*màtya* ‘mature’ in (13)—or by an identificatory construction—*šəmmu Toma* ‘called Toma’ in (3).

3.0. Indefiniteness Marking in Biblical and Modern Hebrew

Indefiniteness marking—typically by means of the numeral ‘one’—has emerged in other Semitic languages, too, including many varieties of Modern (spoken) Arabic and Modern Hebrew. As is the case in NENA, indefiniteness marking is often a contact-induced or at least areal feature (e.g., Edzard 2011).²⁵ However, the development of indefinite markers in Arabic and Hebrew seems, on the whole, to be less advanced than in NENA, which supports the idea that the latter has experienced contact longer and of greater intensity.²⁶

²⁵ For indefiniteness marking as an areal feature outside the Semitic area, see the work Geist (2013) on Bulgarian, part of the Balkan *Sprachbund*.

²⁶ It has long been recognised that contact between Eastern Aramaic and Iranian is of unique historical depth and—it seems—typological

At the same time, even a language which lacks advanced indefinite marking, such as Biblical Hebrew (BH), may occasionally use an indefinite construction. This shows that the communicative capability of language is not restricted by the degree of grammaticalisation at a given point in time. Thus, if a usable structure is available in the language and a communicative intention appears, the language may occasionally choose to explicitly encode a function which it ‘should not’, based on diachronic predictions.

BH lacks a standard indefinite morpheme (cf. Rubin 2013). This notwithstanding, the numeral *ʾeḥāḏ* (*ʾaḥaḏ*) ‘one (MS)’ and its inflectional forms do cover restricted types of indefiniteness and their related functions, such as that of mid-scalar quantifiers. But this remains optional and even the more restricted presentative indefiniteness (Stage 2) does not require morphological marking of indefiniteness. Thus, in (14), the new discourse topic ‘(a) man’ is not modified by ‘one’. At the same time, this referent is introduced through the pragmatically marked Subject-Verb clause. This structure is associated with discourse discontinuity,²⁷ and in example (14) serves to introduce the new discourse topic, the main protagonist of the book:

complexity. For more comprehensive—though mainly synchronic—treatments of this contact situation see, for instance, Noorlander (2014); Haig (2017); Haig and Khan (2019); and Coghill (2020).

²⁷ See Hornkohl (2018) and the references therein.

(14) אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עוּז אִיּוֹב שְׁמוֹ

ʾiš hāyā-Ø bə-ʾereš ʾūs ʾiyyōb šəm-ō

man.MS be.PFV-Ø in-land.FS Uz Job name-his

‘There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.’

(BH, Job 1.1, *BHS*)

In other cases, however, the numeral ‘one’ is used with presentative force, as illustrated in (15). Note also that in contrast to the previous example, the sentence in (15) employs the unmarked Verb-Subject order.²⁸

(15) וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִצֹּרַח

wayhī ʾiš ʾehād miš-šārā

PFV.be.3MS man.MS one.MS of-Zorah

‘There was a certain man of Zorah (of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah).’ (BH, Judg. 13.2, *BHS*)

The BH numeral ‘one’ is also used for the partitive and as a mid-scale quantifier. The partitive differentiates an individual from the definite set or amount to which it belongs, e.g., ‘one of the newspapers (made a different claim about this event)’ or ‘(take) some of the milk’ (Heine 1997, 74). The mid-scalar quantifier has a similar function, but focuses on the quantitative limitation of the referent (or the mass), and thus tends to have plural (or mass) referents, e.g., ‘(only) some newspapers (reported on this)’, ‘some (i.e., a bit of) milk (is left)’. Both functions are concerned with quantity; in the former, as it relates to the whole, and in the latter, as it pertains to pre-existing ideas of measures. As such, their

²⁸ The two examples, therefore, suggest minimal marking of indefiniteness: either a morpheme or a syntactic structure, but not both. A systematic study would be needed to corroborate this minimality principle.

function is closer to that of the numeral than to the indefinite function of the numeral/indefinite marker.²⁹ Despite this subtle difference, some grammars—including those of NENA—subsume mid-scale quantifiers and partitive constructions under the rubric of indefiniteness.

The structure in (16) is an example of the mid-scalar quantifier ('some, a few') for BH; the noun 'days' does not have the definite article, and is modified with 'one', inflected to agree with the masculine plural noun:

- (16) וַיֵּשְׁבֶת עִמּוֹ יָמִים אֶחָדִים
 wayāšab-tā 'imm-ō yām-īm 'aḥād-īm
 FUT.dwell-2MS with-him day.M-PL one-MPL
 'And stay with him awhile (lit. **a few** days)' (BH, Gen. 27.44, *BHS*)

The BH partitive is expressed with a genitive structure ('construct state'), in which 'one' is followed by a (definite and generic) plural or mass noun, like the structure in (17). However, though formally a partitive, the construction in (17) actually encodes indefiniteness, and has a non-specific referent:

- (17) כְּדַבֵּר אֶחָת הַנְּבָלוֹת תִּדְבֹּרִי
 ka-dabbēr 'aḥaṭ han-nəḇal-ōṭ tədabbērī
 as-speaking one.FS DEF-foolish-FPL 2FS.speak
 'You speak as **one** of the foolish women would speak.' (Biblical Hebrew (Job 2.10, *BHS*)

²⁹ For similar claims, cf. Heine (1997, 75) and Haspelmath (2001, 11–12).

In this sentence, ‘one’ does not serve to contrast the individual with the group, i.e., ‘you speak the way (only) one of the foolish women do’, meaning that a partitive reading is not licensed here. This leads us to conclude that this structure—which, in fact, includes the definite article—simply marks indefiniteness i.e. ‘as if you were a foolish woman’. This usage is somewhat reminiscent of French and Italian, which developed a plural indefinite structure out of an erstwhile partitive (Heine 1997, 77). This BH example illustrates that an existing construction can be exploited to convey a different type of meaning, understood as different from the original on the basis of context. Over time, the new meaning can become conventionalised (‘grammaticalised’), which is in fact what happened in French.

In Modern Hebrew (18), the functional scope of the erstwhile numeral (here, *(e)ḥad*) is expanded.³⁰ Most typical is the presentative type (Stage 2), under which *(e)ḥad* encodes specific referents that are further involved in subsequent discourse, for example:

(18) פגשתי אתמול תייר אחד שסיפר לי...

pagaš-ti ’etmol tayar =(e)ḥad še- siper-Ø-li...
 meet.PFV-1SG yesterday tourist.MS one REL PFV.tell-3MS-O.1SG
 ‘I met a **certain** tourist yesterday who told me (about all his adventures).’

³⁰ See, especially, Givón (1981), whose grammaticalisation model for the indefinite morpheme is based primarily on informal Modern Hebrew.

I propose that this likely represents the Slavic substrate of Modern Hebrew. The reason for this is that this situation is comparable with the above-discussed Stage 2 indefinite marker in Polish. By contrast, Germanic languages (e.g., German and Yiddish) have fully-grammaticalised indefinite articles.

4.0. Conclusion and Implications

The NENA varieties discussed here are a salient example of advanced indefinite marking in Semitic. Though still not obligatory and infrequent for plural and mass entities, *xa* (historically ‘one’) can nevertheless convey presentative (Stage 2), specific (Stage 3), and even non-specific indefiniteness (Stage 4). This contrasts with previous accounts of the indefinite marker in NENA as a restricted, Stage 2 morpheme. This, in turn, either indicates that the north-western Iraqi varieties discussed here have more advanced indefiniteness than the previously described dialects, or calls for a more comprehensive treatment of indefinite marking in NENA.

This increase in indefinite marking in Neo-Aramaic is ultimately induced by contact with NENA’s Iranian neighbours. This notwithstanding, existing (informal) descriptions of indefiniteness in Kurdish suggest its restriction to specific referents. Thus, the NENA material presented here calls for an empirical review of this assumption. Is the marking of indefiniteness in some NENA varieties more advanced even than in its contact languages, or is indefinite marking in Kurdish also more advanced than previously estimated?

Indefiniteness marking also occurs in other Semitic languages, but is sometimes more restricted. Thus, in BH, presentative use of the numeral is possible, but not obligatory. Still, BH demonstrates that languages are well capable of explicitly expressing a function such as indefiniteness, even if they do not do so regularly. For instance, they can do so by using an existing, similar structure (e.g., the partitive), whose meaning is then disambiguated on the basis of context.³¹ This, in turn, indicates that we should nuance our idea of grammaticalisation as a *diachronic* process. Sometimes, the diachronic dimension is only a matter of quantity, not quality. In other words, a more abstract function is sometimes already present at an ‘early’ stage of grammaticalisation, but is still infrequent or restricted to particular contexts.

In general, the diachrony of indefiniteness and definiteness marking in Eastern Aramaic and Western Iranian promises to be a fruitful avenue of research. The parallel regarding the absence of fully grammaticalised definite markers in NENA and Northern Kurdish is also intriguing, and one wonders whether—and how—it relates to the semantic bleaching of the ancient Aramaic definite suffix *-ā* in the language’s Eastern branch.

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³¹ Context as a component of meaning creation is a key tenet of Construction Grammar; see, e.g., Booij (2010).

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MIRACLES OF SAINT EPHREM: LEGENDS IN THE NEO-ARAMAIC DIALECT OF UMRA D-SHISH*

Paul M. Noorlander

This paper presents a text in the Northeastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialect of Umra d-Shish, also known simply as Umra or Umra d-Mar Athqen, which goes by the Kurdish name Dêr Şîş (دێر شیش). The name is probably derived from **‘ūmrā d-šgīš* ‘the monastery that is shaken’, presumably referring to an earthquake.

* It is my pleasure to contribute to this volume in honour of Prof. Geoffrey Khan, whose endless dedication to the documentation of the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects has arguably revolutionised the field of Aramaic dialectology. I am grateful for the many projects on which we have been able to collaborate in the past few years. To you whose legacy will have a lasting impact for many years to come, the very best wishes on your retirement!

The recording of the Neo-Aramaic text was made by Roberta Borghero in Paris on 15 May 2006. The file can be found in MP3 format on the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Database Project (Khan et al. 2022) website at <https://nena.ames.cam.ac.uk/audio/64/>. I am indebted to Aziz Al-Zebari for his work on an earlier draft of the transcription and translation of this text. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer and especially to Eleanor Coghill for their helpful comments on this paper. All remaining errors, however, are my own.

Umra d-Shish was situated in Iraq, northwest of Zakho, next to its border with Turkey. Nearby Christian villages in Iraq were Yarda, Sharanish, and Alanish, and in Turkey Billin, Harbole, and Iŝši. In 1957, Umra d-Shish was the home of fifty families, consisting of ca 360 Chaldeans. The town was destroyed in 1976 (Eshoo 2004; Donabed 2015, 185). There was an old church dedicated to St Ephrem, the patron saint, as well as an ancient monastery of St Athqen, which had been abandoned already centuries before its ruins were found by Jacque Rhétoré in the nineteenth century (Wilmschurst 2000, 110).

The following text narrates miracles of healing and childbirth attributed to saint Ephrem. The speaker narrates how the mentally ill, i.e., *deywane* ‘insane’, were held captive at the church, and how families would bring their mentally ill relatives in the hope they would be healed. She also relates that people would come to pray to St Ephrem to request they might give birth to a son. First, a few dialectal hallmarks will be discussed to aid in the reading of the text. Then the complete text is given in transcription with an English translation, followed by a slightly shortened glossed version. In the transcription, the vertical line ^l is used to indicate an intonation boundary, nuclear stress is indicated with a grave accent, and non-penultimate stress is indicated with an acute accent. The small equal sign = is used to mark the boundary of clitic elements, e.g., the copula. The schwa ə represents the near-high front unrounded vowel [ɪ], e.g., *grəšle* [grɪʃle]. A breve above a vowel signifies that the vowel is short when it occurs in an open syllable, and a macron signifies that the vowel

is long when occurring in closed syllables; thus, *nāsāx* corresponds to Kurdish Latin spelling < nesax > [næ'sa:χ].

1.0. Dialectal Features

The dialect of Umra d-Shish has several features that are typical of NENA dialects of northwestern Iraq and/or southeastern Turkey (in particular the Şırnak Province). The interdental fricative allophones **t̪* [θ] and **d̪* [ð] have merged with the stops **t* and **d*, as they have in the majority of NENA dialects. Diphthongs have largely been preserved, and the original voiced velar/uvular fricative **ḡ* [ɣ]~[ʁ] and voiced pharyngeal fricative **ʕ* [ʕ] have been lost or have merged with the glottal stop **ʔ* [ʔ]. Examples of these developments are:

* <i>baytā</i>	>	<i>bayta</i>	‘house’	* <i>tar‘ā</i>	>	<i>tāra</i>	‘door’
* <i>īdā</i>	>	<i>īda</i>	‘hand’	* <i>rāḡola</i>	>	<i>rā’ola</i>	‘valley’
* <i>‘aynā</i>	>	<i>‘ayna</i>	‘eye’	* <i>tawrā</i>	>	<i>tawra</i>	‘bull’

There is optional monophthongisation of /ay/ via [ey] to [e], sometimes [ɛ]. Examples of [e] in the text include the contraction of the final /a/ of the nominal and the initial /i/ of the immediately following copula, e.g., *qaddīše=le* ‘he is a saint’ (2) from *qaddīša=yile*. Examples of [ɛ] in the text include *dēra* ‘monastery’ (9) and *xelana* ‘strong’ (9), but contrast *xaylana* (10).

With respect to morphology, the dialect has preserved a dedicated feminine form of the indefinite article and numeral ‘one’:

F	<i>da</i>	<i>baxta</i>	‘a woman’
M	<i>xa</i>	<i>brona</i>	‘a son’

Sometimes, however, *xa* is also used with feminine nouns, e.g., (16) *xa šabta* ‘one week.’

Third person marking is as follows:

	POSSESSIVE	L-SUFFIX
3MSG	-u	-le
3FSG	-aw	-la
3PL	-ay, -ehən	-ley, -lay, -lehən, -ne

The third-person singular forms of the possessive suffixes *-u* and *-aw* are typical of dialects in southeastern Turkey, such as Jənnət and Harbole.

The preposition *lal-* introduces recipients, beneficiaries, and addressees, e.g., *zərale lali* ‘she visits him for me’ (29), *y-amər lalu* ‘he says to him’ (6). This, too, is typical of dialects of south-eastern Turkey.

The dialect is archaic in its use of the allative-comitative preposition *lwat* ‘towards; with’ (compare Syriac ܠܐܠ *lwāt*, Targum Aramaic ܠܘܬ *ləwāt*) and maintains both original meanings of motion towards and accompaniment,¹ e.g., *zala lwat qaddiša* ‘she goes to the saint’ (29), *Mu‘ayyad lwati tīwe-wa* ‘Muayyad lived with me’ (31). Thus far this preposition has only been attested as *wot* in the so-called *ḥ*-dialects of Umra and Jənnət in Bohtan (south-eastern Turkey). The alternatives in this dialect are *geb-* (9) and *kəd-* (30), where some other dialects would have *kəs-*. Apart from *lwat-* ‘toward; with, at’, the speaker also uses *mwat-* (30) to express ‘of one’s own accord’, presumably a reflex of **min + *lwāt* ‘from the presence of’, compare Biblical Aramaic מִן-לְוֹת *min=ləwāt* (Ezra 4.12) and Targum Aramaic מִלְוֹת *milləwāt*.

The interrogative adverb *qawi* ‘why’ (7) is different from the usual *qay* (7) found across NENA dialects and Ṭuroyo, as well

¹ See Pat-El (2020) for a discussion of this Aramaic preposition.

as Kurdish. The form *qay* is a loan from Kurdish < qey > *qay* into Neo-Aramaic, although may, in theory, reflect a combination of the NENA preposition *qa-* ‘for, to’ (< *qḏām* ‘for, to’) and the interrogative pronoun *mahi* (Khan 2002, 44). The NENA form *qawi* ‘why’ corresponds to the Northern Kurdish form *qawi* (Ergin Öpengin p.c.).² Kurdish < qey > *qey* has no clear etymology, but various possible Arabic origins come to mind, e.g., *قصد* *qaṣd* ‘purpose’ (Kurdish < qesd >), *قاعدة* *qāʿida* ‘base; rule’ (Kurdish < qaîde >), *غاية* *gāya* ‘purpose, end’ (Turkish < gaie >).

In terms of verbal morphology, the future preverbal modifier is *b-*, and the indicative-habitual preverb is *y-* and *ʾi-*, still used with all verbs alike, whereas this is confined to vowel-initial verbs in some other dialects. There is a past perfective transitive preverb *kām-* (Borghero 2016), but it does not occur in this text.

The texts contain a number of relevant expressions pertaining to childbirth, *hwela brona* ‘she gave birth to a son’, *m-hw* (II), e.g., (26) *ma le mahwat* ‘why don’t you give birth?’, and *m-ty* (II), e.g., (39) *muttelax xa Muʿayyad* ‘you gave birth (lit. put) to one Muayyad’. This also involves *hwy* I + subject co-referential L-suffixes, e.g., (20 *et passim*) *la hawéwala* ‘she would not give birth,’ which can be considered an impersonal construction with non-canonical subject (Noorlander 2021). It is noteworthy that L-suffixes can be co-referential with the addressee of the imperative, e.g., (29) *xa tḥfla mételax!* ‘Bring forth a child!’. Similarly, subject-marking L-suffixes are found not only—as expected—in the past perfective inflection of the verb ‘go’ in this dialect, e.g.,

² It is reminiscent of Kurdish < qewî > *qāwi* ‘very much’ (Chyet 2003, 486) from Arabic قوي *qawīyy* ‘strong’.

zəl-la ‘she went’ (13), but also in the present imperfective, e.g., *za-la* ‘she goes’ (20).

The dialect possibly uses a particle *qəm*, derived from *qəm-le* ‘he got up’, to express mirativity, as in the dialect of Harbole (Khan 2021, 171), west of Umra d-Shish. A possible example is attested in (10), e.g., *ləblale babaw qəm mūnixale* ‘Her father took her, and suddenly he healed her.’ The verb *qym* ‘get up’ is also used as a conjunctural adverb.³

2.0. Contact Languages

The main contact languages in this text are Arabic and Kurdish. The invariant adjective *nāsāx* (6) ‘unwell’, for instance, comes from Kurdish <nesax> *nāsāx* ‘unwell, ill’, and *mərād* (F) ‘wish’ (20), (21), and (36), for example, is presumably originally from Kurdish <mirad> *mərād* ‘desire, wish’ (Chyet 2002, 389), and ultimately presumably from Arabic مراد *murād* ‘desired’. There are numerous loanwords from (Iraqi) Arabic, including *qubba* (F) ‘dome, room’ (19), *kaffiya* (F) ‘kerchief’ (20), (22), and the verbs *zyr* ‘visit’ (26), (29), and (30), *fyt* ‘pass’ (31), and presumably *l-jawwa* ‘under’ (16), which is a preposition characteristic of Iraqi Arabic. There are also several instances where the speaker switches to Arabic, especially in religious exclamations, e.g., *subḥanak ya rab!* ‘Your glory, o Lord!’ (11), (19), (32).

³ See Noorlander and Mohammadirad (2022, 99–101) for a discussion.

3.0. Text and Translation

Abbreviations

1	first person	RB	Roberta Borghero
2	second person	REL	relative
3	third person	SBJV	subjunctive
Arb.	Arabic	SG	singular
COP	copula	VN	verbal noun
DEF	definite	VOC	vocative
DEIX	deictic		
DEM	demonstrative		
EXST	existential		
F	feminine		
FS	feminine singular		
FUT	future		
GEN	genitive		
IMP	imperative		
IND	indicative-habitual		
INDF	indefinite		
INF	infinitive		
INJ	interjection		
K.	Kurdish		
M	masculine		
MIR	mirative		
MS	masculine singular		
NEG	negator		
PL	plural		
PST	past		
PTCP	resultative participle		
Q	question particle		

- (1) [Guest: *Maṛ ʿAṣṣṣam, qaddišət ʿUmṛa.*]¹
- (2) *qaddiše-le. ʿawwa šerət wəḏlan təmmal, ʿawwa d-Maṛ-
ʿAṣṣam-ile, ʿè.*¹
- (3) *ʿajəbūta?*¹
- (4) [RB: *ʿe, ʿajəbūta.*]
- (5) *ʿe, ṭabʿān! muxwele xāyla!*¹
- (6) *ʿəṭwa da-brāta, dā-brata nāsāx-iwa. y-axlāwaley pilālaw=u
max deywānte-wa. xā-naša y-amər lālu!*¹
- (7) “*qāy-ila bratux hatxa, hatxa nāsāx? qāwi-la hatxa
[lekəteyan=u čataley]*⁴ *jūllaw. qāwi ʿi-nagzala ganaw=u qāwi?*”¹
- (8) *y-āmər: “mā-ʿawḏən? čū-duka la ṭreli ʿəlla la ləblali, lela
bənyāxa.”*¹
- (9) *y-amər lālu: “b-amrənnux, ʿitən xa... xa dēra, ʿitən xa dera
kabīra xelana, m-kulle ləbbux tkūl bəyyū! si gēbu! si gēbu=u
šāməra ganux qam-māʿmāš! mšāmər, mšāməra qam-ʿāqlu!”*¹
- (10) *zəlle l-ə Maṛ-ʿAṣṣam. qāwi pəšle hatxa xaylana? muxwele
ʿajəbwāta b-ə brata. mūnixāle. qəmle zəlle, ləblale bābaw,
qəm mūnixāle.*¹
- (11) *y-āmri*¹—^{Arb.}*subḥanak ya ṛəb*^{Arb.}—*y-āmri danət ləblale lwatu
mūnəxle, lalət ʿanət makrəzi—kaltu, litən?—b-āmər.*¹

⁴ Meaning unclear.

- (1) (RB: St Ephrem, the saint of Umra.)
- (2) He is a saint. This festival we held yesterday, it is that of St Ephrem, indeed.
- (3) [His] miraculous power?
- (4) (RB: Yes, miraculous power.)
- (5) Yes, of course! He showed power!
- (6) There was a girl, a girl who was ill. She would eat her shoes, for she was that insane. Someone said to him (i.e., her father):
- (7) “Why is your daughter like this? Why is she ill like that? Why is she like this and chewing on (?) her clothes this way? Why does she bite herself? Why?”
- (8) “What shall I do?” he said. “I have no place left where I did not take her to, but she does not recover.”
- (9) He said to him, “I shall tell you. There is a... a monastery. There is a monastery that is very powerful. Rely on him wholeheartedly! Go to him! Go to him and lie prostrate before him! Lie prostrate before his feet.”
- (10) He went to that St Ephrem. Why did he become such a strong saint? He showed miracles through the girl. He healed her. Then⁵ her father went and took her, and unexpectedly he healed her.
- (11) They say that—Your glory, o Lord—they say that when he took her to him and (St Ephrem) performed the healing, to those who preach—his daughter-in-law, wasn’t it?—one would say,

⁵ Lit. ‘he got up’.

- (12) “*Mār-ʿAprəm mūnixa[le]*⁶ *da bràta,*[|] *da brata hātxe-wa,*[|] *hātxe-wa,*[|] *deywānte-wa.*[|] *nāsāx-iwa,*[|] *lè-xazéwala gana*^{Arb. ʿala} *ṭawl*^{Arb.},[|] *mūnixale Mār-ʿAprəm.*[|] *ʿè,*[|] *wa-hadax tà tama.*[|] *tà tama,*[|] *la mà məri lālax,*[|] *tà tama!*”
- (13) *ʿu zəlla*⁷ *l-šəru.*[|] *zəlla wəla hole məlyə naše*[|] *məlyə*[|] *gawàye.*[|] *hole qdila.*[|] *holey holey zənjire b-idàtay,*[|] *holey hātxa-w*[|] *zənjire b-idatay,*[|] *deywàne.*[|] *ʿe, y-attiwaley qam do gawzət məri lālax.*[|] *ʿawwa gawza, litən?*[|] *ʿumra.*[|] *y-attiwa, ʿaxnan là yaruxwa.*[|] *ʿaxni zore, zalan qam gawza là yaruxwa.*[|] *y-arqiwa bàṭran.*[|] *la ṭariwa mata ʿi-zawane ʿəl-Goral.*⁸ *dri bàla.*[|] *qu lābəlley!*[|] *là ṭarəttey!*[|] *ʿi-zadi yalan mənney.*
- (14) “*ʿàyka=wət ʿadlele? qam ʿaqlət rabban Mār-ʿAprəm?*”
- (15) *y-amər, “è.”*[|]
- (16) *y-amər,*[|] “*qu sī lābəlla l-jawwa sawòra.*[|] *ʿè.*[|] *ʿətwaley sawora ʿət dāw ʿumra.*[|] *kut šabta xa b-zale b-malhèwaley.*[|] *xa šabta b-zale Frànso,*[|] *xa šabta b-zale ʿAbu Stìvən,*[|] *xa šabta b-zale Ḥamìd,*[|] *da šabta b-zale Sàləm,*[|] *da šabta b-zàlewa,*[|] *b-zale b-malhèle.*”[|]
- (17) *b-amri: “ʿe šabta sərət māni-le malheta rabban Mār-ʿAprəm?” masalan b-amri Ḥamìd-ile.*[|]

⁶ Not audible.

⁷ Perhaps the pharyngealisation anticipates *wəlla* here.

⁸ Meaning unclear. Possibly a proper noun.

- (12) “St Ephrem healed a certain girl, a girl who was such and such, was insane. She was ill, and would never look after herself, [but] St Ephrem healed her. Yes, now come there. Didn’t I tell you to go there?”
- (13) She went to his (i.e., the saint’s) festival. She went and—look!—it was full of people, full inside. It was locked. People had⁹ chains on their hands, they were like this, with their hands chained, the insane. Indeed, they sat down under the walnut tree I told you about. This walnut tree over here, isn’t it? The church. They used to sit there, we small children dared not go close to the walnut tree. They would run after us. They would not let them go to the village, they would go to Goral. Be careful! Get up [and] take them! Don’t set them free! Our children are scared of them.
- (14) “Where are you staying tonight? Before the feet of the monk St Ephrem?”
- (15) “Yes.”, he said.
- (16) “Up! Go [and] take her to the overseer. They used to have an overseer of the church. Every week one would go to light [the lamps]. One week Franso would go. Abu Steven would go another¹⁰ week. Hamid would go yet another week. Salem would go another week. One week he used go, he used to go and light [the lamps of the church].”
- (17) “Whose turn is it this week to light the lamps for St Ephrem?” they would ask. For example, they would say it was Hamid’s.

⁹ Lit. ‘there are’.

¹⁰ Lit. ‘a’.

- (18) “sì[|] málheley ʔəš-ʔumṛa,[|] lābəlley deywane, sì!”
- (19) *b-qayəmwa b-zàwale.[|] b-záwale ʔaw sawora b-labálwale ʔan deywane nqide hatxa ʔidata, litən?[|] lá yariwa ʔaríwaley,[|] b-arqiwa batṛət nàše.[|] ʔi-labliwa madməx... ʔi-labliwa madməx-iwa gàwu.[|] našwate b-tawiwa tāmàha[|] w-ani b-daríwalay b-de qubba qadlíwale ʔāra bàṭrey.[|] qadlíwale ʔāra bàṭrey[|] ʔaríwaley tama.[|] ʔət he mnəxle[|] ʔawa b-atewa b-ganu, hatxa b-dayəqwa l-ʔāra.[|] b-dayəqwa l-ʔāra b-amərwa: “nəxli!”[|]—^{Arb.}subḥanak ya ṛəb^{Arb.}—[|]”nəxli!”[|] ʔo d-là nəxle[|] b-amriwa našwatu là nəxle.[|]*
- (20) ʔè,[|] ʔè,[|] ʔè![|] yàle,[|] kùt.[|] ʔətwa xa ḥădíď hàtxa[|] m-reša l-rèša.[|] tamma dərya,[|] tamma dərya.[|] ʔay d-la hawéwala ʔi-zala daryáwala kaffiyya=w[|] hatxa ʔlaθá-bene mšamráwala ʔəllu.[|] kəbawa mərāď.[|] kəbáwala mərāď. gənax xza![|] mäh-iwa b-ləb-baw, b-ləbbaw b-amràwa.[|]

- (18) “Go and light the lamps at the church! Take the insane people and go!”
- (19) Then¹¹ he would go. That overseer would go [and] take along the insane people with their hands chained like this, isn’t it? They did not dare set them free, lest they would ran after people. They took them to put them to sl... they took them to put them to bed. Their relatives would sit over there, while they would put them in that room [and] lock the door behind them. After they locked the door behind them, they left them there. The one who happened to recover would come by himself knocking at the door like this. After he knocked at the door, he would say, “I am healed”—Your glory, oh Lord!— “I am healed!” [About] the one who did not recover, his relatives would say that he did not heal.
- (20) Yes, indeed! Children, everyone. There was a piece of iron from this end to that end.¹² It was fixed there, it was fixed here.¹³ A woman who would not give birth¹⁴ would go and place the handkerchief. She would prostrate herself on it (i.e., the piece of iron) three times this way. [After all] she had a wish.¹⁵ So, she wanted the wish. See for yourself! Whatever was in her heart, she would say in her heart,

¹¹ Lit. ‘he would rise’.

¹² Lit. ‘from head to head’.

¹³ Lit. ‘there’.

¹⁴ Lit. ‘would not be born to her’.

¹⁵ Lit. ‘wanted a desire’.

- (21) “ʾana ʿe mərəád kəban mən̄nux.ʼ| ya ɾabban Mār-ʾAp̄rəṃ,ʼ|
ʾawdətla mərədi!”
- (22) bà...ʼ| bà...ʼ| záwala mšamráwale kaffiya=wʼ| šabtət šeta
hawəwala.ʼ| hawéwala yāle.ʼ| ʾè,ʼ| kəbāwa mərəád.ʼ|
- (23) ʾana ɬotaʼ—dá=baxta mən̄ni nāsāx,ʼ| xadèsar šənnə.ʼ|
Dawədnète=wa.ʼ| tela nəxtət yəmmi,ʼ| tela lwāti.ʼ| nxətla tela y-
àmra.ʼ|
- (24) “xati jwàne!”ʼ|
- (25) y-amra: “nò?”
- (26) y-àmraʼ| xalto Ràḥeʼ| ʾiba zeràle.ʼ| ʾamra: “ʾàna ʾamran lalu,ʼ| mà
le mahwat=u ma hawelax xà-brona xena.”ʼ|
- (27) y-amra: “mà ʾawdan?ʼ| xāf ʾawya bràta.”ʼ|
- (28) ʾamra: “là,ʼ| ʿəjbonət ʾalàha.”ʼ|

- (21) "I want this from you. O the monk St Ephrem, fulfil it for me!"¹⁶
- (22) She went [and] rolled up the handkerchief and the same time next year¹⁷ she gave birth.¹⁸ She had children.¹⁹ Indeed, she wanted this.²⁰
- (23) As for me, an old woman, a woman [stayed] with me [who was] ill, for eleven years. She was from the village of Dawediya. My late mother came, she came to me. [The old woman called Naima] went down, came, saying:
- (24) "My dear sister!"
- (25) "Well?" my mother²¹ said.
- (26) "Aunt Rachel says she could visit him (i.e., St Ephrem). She (i.e., this aunt) says, "I would tell him, why doesn't she (i.e., Naima)²² give birth and have another son?"
- (27) "What am I to do?" she (i.e., Naima) said. "I fear it might be a girl."
- (28) "No, [it is up to] God's pleasure," she (i.e., my mother) said.

¹⁶ Lit. 'do my desire'.

¹⁷ Lit. 'the week of the year'.

¹⁸ Lit. '(it) would be born to her'.

¹⁹ Or lit. 'children would be born to her'.

²⁰ Lit. 'a wish'.

²¹ Lit. 'she'.

²² Lit. 'you'.

- (29) *y-amrala*: “...²³ *mūra xal... xalto Ràḥe* | *zala lwat qaddiša zemale lali*. | *har ʿat lèwat bəpraqa mənni*. | *holax mārəlli mète-lax*, | *xa təfla mètélax!* (*hola mārəlli yəmmi kore ʿàna*.) | *xalti Ràḥe*, | *har yəmmət Marqus, hola mara ləli*, | “*ʿəl ma le peyšat* ^{Arb.}*ḥàməl*^{Arb.}, | *le peyšat* ^{Arb.}*ḥàməl*^{Arb.}, | *le peyšat* ^{Arb.}*ḥàməl*^{Arb.}.” |
- (30) *qəm̩la y-àmra*, | “*ʿana mwàti*, | *ʿana mwàti pare mwàti b-daryán-wale*, | *bas lazəm—yəm̩mi-la mara—* | *y-amra lazəm mən kəddət bəbu*, | *mən kəddaw yawàl* | ^{Arb.}*ḥatta*^{Arb.} | *l-alaha* ^{Arb.}*qàbəl*^{Arb.}.” | *b-aqquta qam ʿalàḥa*. | *b-aqquta qam ʿalàḥa*, | *lətlax mawmata ʿəlli*, | *b-ayya* ^{Ar}*naʿme*^{Ar} | *t-ile ʿalaha xliqəllaw*, | *zəra yəm̩mi Mər-ʿAprəm̩ l-è baxta*. |
- (31) *fətl̩a*. | *ʿətwalan xà xərriḡ-iwa* | *y-amr̩wale Muʿayyad lwati tíwe-wa, litən?* | *ma t-iwa šàtər*, | *ma t-iwa hawnàna*, | *hadax ʿaqəl-iwa y-amra ʿàḥəd y-amra*! |
- (32) “*ʿən haweli xa brona, matwan šəm̩mu Muʿayyad*. | *šəmmət daw yala, litən?*” | —^{Arb.}*subḥanak ya rəb*^{Arb.}! — *šabtət šeta hwela bròna*. |

²³ Mumbling.

- (29) She (i.e., Naima) said to her (i.e., my mother), "...Tell aunt Rachel to go to the saint for me, that she may visit him for me. You never stop²⁴ [asking] me. You keep telling me to bring forth a child, bring forth a child!" ([She thought,] if my mother keeps telling me, I would go blind.) "Aunt Rachel, the mother of Marqus, keeps telling me, "Why aren't you getting pregnant, aren't you getting pregnant, aren't you getting pregnant?"
- (30) Then²⁵ she (i.e., my mother) thought,²⁶ "I from myself, I would give my own money from myself, but she must"—my mother is saying—she says, "she should give it from what's at father's home, from what's at her home, so that it may be acceptable to God." I swear²⁷ before God. I swear before God, while you do not have something to make me swear, I swear on this blessing that God has created, that my mother did visit the church of St Ephrem for that woman.
- (31) It passed. We used to have a graduate called Muayyad living with me. Wasn't it? How clever he was, how smart he was, so intelligent that she (i.e., Naima) promised saying,
- (32) "If I ever gave birth to²⁸ a son, I would give him the²⁹ name Muayyad, the name of this child, isn't it?" Your glory, oh Lord! The same time the following year³⁰ she gave birth to a son.

²⁴ Lit. 'always you are not finishing from'.

²⁵ Lit. 'she rose'.

²⁶ Lit. 'said'.

²⁷ Lit. 'in truth'.

²⁸ Lit. 'would be (born) to me'.

²⁹ Lit. 'his name'.

³⁰ Lit. 'the week of the year'.

- (33) *y-amra*: “*’a xalto Raḥe Maṭ-Māryam yawàlax.*”
- (34) *y-amran*: “*xzay! mà məri lalax?| xzay! mà məri lalax?*”[|]
- (35) *zəra yəmmi lalaw.*[|] *zəra yəmmi ’aw dera lələw.*[|] *y-àmra,*[|] *zəlla yəmmi—|y-amra:*
- (36) “*ya ’allā=w ya ṛabban Maṭ-’Āṣṛəm!*[|] *’ayya baxtət nxətla=w mərə lali,*[|] *xākma mərə lali:*[|] “*’awwa məndi matwanne š-xaprət ’ət ṛabban Maṭ-’Āṣṛəm,*[|] *’ay mərəād t-ila b-ləbbət de baxta b-ḥəšlətta.*”[|]
- (37) *’amen! tūb qamux ṛab=u ’alāhi,*[|] *šabtət šeta telay naše m-qārwan.*[|]
- (38) *y-amranney*: “*amrútənnə yəmmi ’ətla Na‘ima xa brəna.*”[|]
- (39) *’è,*[|] *y-amri lələw:*[|] “*’āt!| xzày!| la məri lalax muttelax muttelax xa Mu‘àyyad?*”
- (40) *y-amra*, “*bāle šəmmət dawwa jirənan—|’awwa Mu‘ayyad šəṭər=ile,*[|] *’è,*[|] *t-ile tiwa gu dè qubba|—haweli brona matwanne šəmmu Mu‘àyyad,*[|] *’è.*”[|]
- (41) *’aw bena,* *’əšlan m-’alma,*[|] *brəti.*[|] *kabira ’əšlan m-naše.* ^{Arb.} *’aləf ’əl-ḥamdəlla w-aš-šəkər* ^{Arb.} *’| xzəlan naše ṭəwe=w xzəlan naše là ṭəwe,*[|] ^{Arb.} *bas zāmən* ^{Arb.} *’|*

- (33) She said, “Oh Aunt Rachel, may St Mary bless³¹ you!”
- (34) “See! Didn’t I tell you?” I said. “See! Didn’t I tell you?”
- (35) My mother had gone to visit for her (i.e., Naima). After my mother visited that monastery for her, she had said—my mother had gone there, and said—,
- (36) “Dear God and dear the monk St Ephrem! This woman who went down and told me, a few [times] she said to me, ‘I would like to put this thing on the pit of St Ephrem, and so please fulfil the wish that is in the heart of that woman.’
- (37) Amen! Blessed are you, my Lord and God! The same time next year people came from a caravan.
- (38) I told them, ‘You are to tell my mother that Naima has a son.’”
- (39) They told her (i.e., my mother). [I said,] “You! See! Didn’t I tell you you would give birth, you would give birth to one Muayyad?”
- (40) She (i.e., Naima) said, “Alright, as for the name of this neighbour of ours—this Muayyad is very clever, yes, the one who lives in this room—If I have a son, I will give him the name Muayyad, indeed.”
- (41) At that time we lived with a crowd, my daughter. We lived with lots of people. A thousand praises and thanks [be to God]! We have seen both good and bad people, but time takes its toll.³²

³¹ Lit. ‘grant, give to’.

³² Lit. ‘but time’.

4.0. Glossed Text

- (2) *qaddiše=le.*[|] 'awwa šer-ət wəd-lan təmmal,[|]
 saint.MS=COP.3MS DEM.3MS festival.MS-REL did-1PL yesterday
'awwa d-Mār-ʾAprəm=ile,[|] 'è.[|]
 DEM.3MS of-saint-Ephrem=COP.3MS yes
 He is a saint. This festival we held yesterday, it is that of
 St. Ephrem, indeed.
- (5) 'e, *ṭabʾān*^{33|} muxwe-le xàyla![|]
 yes naturally showed-3MS strength.MS
 Yes, of course. He showed power!
- (6) 'ət-wa da-bràta,[|] dá-brata nāsàx³⁴=iwa.[|]
 EXST-PST INDF.FS-girl.FS INDF.FS-girl.FS unwell=PST.COP.3SG
 There was a girl, a girl who was ill.
*y-axl-á-wa-ley pilâl*³⁵-aw=u[|] max deywànte=wa.[|]
 IND-eat-3FS-PST-3PL shoe.PL-her-and like crazy.FS=PST.COP.3SG
 She would eat her shoes, for she was that insane.
xá=naša y-amər-Ø lâl-u:
 INDF.MS=man.MS IND-say-3MS to-3MS
 Someone said to him (i.e., her father):
- (7) “qày=ila brat-ux hatxa,[|] hatxa nāsàx?”[|]
 why=COP.3FS girl.FS-your.MS so so unwell
 “Why is your daughter like this? Why is she ill like that?”

³³ Arb. *طبعاً* *ṭabʿan* ‘naturally’.

³⁴ K. <nesax> *nāsàx* < *nā-* ‘un’ + *sax* ‘alive; healthy’.

³⁵ K. <pêlal> *pelâl* ‘shoe’.

- (8) *y-àmər-Ø:*¹ “*mā=ʿawd-ən?*¹ *čū-duka la ʔre-li*³⁶

IND-say-3MS what-do-1MS NEG-place NEG left-1SG

ʿalla la ləbl-a-le, lela bə-nyàxa.”¹

except NEG took-3FS-3MS NEG.COP.3MS in-heal.INTR.INF

“What shall I do?” he said. “I have no place left except for where I did not take her to, but she does not recover.”

- (9) *y-amər-Ø ləl-u:*¹ “*b-amr-ən-nux,*¹ *ʔitən xa dèra*

IND-say-3MS to-3MS FUT-say-1MS-2MS EXST INDF.MS monastery.MS

*kabîra xelana,*¹

very strong.MS

He said to him, “I shall tell you. There is a monastery that is very powerful.

*m-kulle ləbb-ux tkūl bəyy-ù!*¹ *si gèb-u!*

from-all.MS heart.MS-your.MS trust.IMP in-3MS go.IMP next-3MS

Rely on him wholeheartedly! Go to him!

*šámər-a*³⁷ *gan-ux qam-màʿməš! mšámər-a*

roll_up.IMP-3FS self.FS-2MS before-?³⁸ roll_up.IMP-3FS

qam-ʾàql-u!”¹

before-foot.PL-his

Lie prostrate before him! Lie prostrate before his feet.”

- (10) *zəl-le l-ò Maṛ-ʾAṗṛəm.*¹

went-3MS to-DEM.MS saint-Ephrem

He went to that St. Ephrem.

³⁶ The root *ʔry* I corresponds in meaning to *šwq* I ‘let; leave behind’ elsewhere in NENA.

³⁷ Arb. شمر *šammara* ‘roll up; tuck up’.

³⁸ Meaning unclear.

qàwi pəš-le hatxa xaylana?[|]

why became-3MS so strong.MS

Why did he become such a strong saint?

muxwe-le 'ajəbw-àta[|] b-è brata.[|] mǔnix-à-le.[|]

showed-3MS miracle.FS-PL in-DEM.FS daughter.FS healed-3FS-3MS

He showed power through the girl. He healed her.

qəm-le zəl-le,[|] ləbl-a-le bəb-aw,[|] qəm mǔnix-à-le.[|]

rose-3MS went-3MS took-3FS-3MS father.MS-her MIR healed-3FS-3MS

Then her father went and took her, and suddenly he healed her.

- (11) *y-àm-r-i[|] dan-ət ləbl-a-le lwat-u mǔnəx-le,[|]*

IND-say-3PL time-REL took-3FS-3MS toward-3MS healed.TR-3MS

lalət 'an-ət makrəz-i

to DEM.PL-REL preach-3PL

They say that when he took her to him and performed the healing, to those who preach

—kalt-u, l-itàn?—[|] b-àmər-Ø:[|]

daughter-in-law-his NEG-EXST FUT-say-3MSG

—his daughter-in-law, wasn't it?—, one would say,

- (12) “*Maṛ-ʿApṛəṃ mǔnix-a-le da bràta,[|] da brata*

saint-Ephrem healed-3FS-3MS INDF.MS girl.FS INDF.MS girl.FS

hàtxe-wa,[|] deywànte-wa.[|] nāsāx-iwa,[|] lé

SO=PST.COP.3SG crazy.FS=PST.COP.3SG unwell-PST.COP.3SG NEG

xazé-Ø-wa-la gan-a[|] Arb. ʕala ʔawl^{Arb.}[|]

see-3MS-PST-3FS self.FS-3FS on length

“St. Ephrem healed a certain girl, a girl who was such and such, was insane. She was ill, she would never look after herself.

mūnix-a-le Mār-ʿAprəṃ. ʾè, wa-hadax tà tama.
 healed-3FS-3MS saint-Ephrem yes and-thus come.IMP there
 St. Ephrem healed her. Yes, now come there.

la mà mār-i lāl-ax, tà tama!”
 NEG Q said-1SG to-2FS come.IMP there
 Didn’t I tell you: Come there!”

- (13) *ʾu zəl-la l-šēr-u. zəl-la wəla hole*
 and went-3FS to-festival-his went-3FS and.DEIX DEIX.COP.3MS
məly-a naše gawàye.
 full-MS people.PL inside
 She went to his festival. She went and—look!—it was full
 of people inside.

hole qdīl-a. holey zənjir³⁹-e b-id-àt-ay,
 DEIX.COP.3MS locked-MS DEIX.COP.3PL chain-PL on-hand.FS-PL-their
holey hātxa=w zənjir-e b-id-at-ay deywàn-e.
 DEIX.COP.3PL so = and chain-PL on-hand.FS-PL-their crazy-PL
 It was locked. People had chains on their hands, they were
 like this, with their hands chained, the insane.

ʾe, y-att-ì-wa-ley⁴⁰ qam do⁴¹ gawz-ət mār-i
 yes IND-sit-3PL-PST-3PL before GEN.DEM.MS walnut.tree-REL said-1SG
lāl-ax. ʾawwa gawza, l-ìtən? ʾùmrā.
 said-2FS DEM.MS walnut.tree.MS NEG-EXST church.MS
 Indeed, they sat down under the walnut tree I told you
 about. This walnut tree over here, isn’t it? The church.

³⁹ K. <zencîr> *zanjîr* ‘chain’.

⁴⁰ From **yatw-ì-wa-ley*, the same in C. Barwar (Khan 2008, 217).

⁴¹ On the analysis of *d-* + demonstrative as a genitive, see Gutman (2008).

y-att-i-wa, 'axnan là yar⁴²-ux-wa. | 'axni zor-e, za-lan

IND-sat-3PL-PST we NEG dare-1PL-PST we small-PL go-1PL

qam gawza là yar-ux-wa. | y-arq-i-wa bàṭṭ-an. |

before walnut.tree NEG dare-1PL-PST IND-run-3PL-PST after-1PL

la ṭar-i-wa mata 'i-za-wa-ne 'al-Goral

NEG let-3PL-PST village IND-go-PST-3PL to-PROPN

They used to sit there, we small children dared not go close to the walnut tree. They would run after us. They would not let them go to the village, they would go to Goral.

dri bala qu làbəl-ley! | là ṭar-ət-tey! |

put.IMP mind.MS rise.IMP take.IMP-3PL NEG let-2MS-3PL

Be careful, get up, take them! Don't set them free!

'i-zad-i yal-an mən-ey.

IND-fear-3PL child.PL-our from-3PL

Our children are scared of them.

- (14) “*àyka=wət 'adlele? qam 'aql-ət ṛabban*

where-COP.2MS tonight before feet.PL-of monk.MS

Ṣàṛ-'Aprəm?”

saint-Ephrem

“Where are you staying tonight? Before the feet of the monk St. Ephrem?”

- (15) *y-amər-Ø, “è.” |*

IND-say-3MS yes

He said, “Yes.”

⁴² The root is *yʾr, see Maclean (1901, 115). I am grateful to Eleanor Coghill for drawing my attention to this reference.

- (16) *y-amər-Ø,*[|] “*qu sì lābəl-la l-jawwa sawòra.*”[|]
 IND-say-3MS rise.IMP go.IMP take.IMP-3FS to-under overseer.MS
 “Up! Go [and] put her under the charge of the overseer.”

ʔè.[|] *ʔət-wa-ley sawora ʔət dāw ʔumṛa.*[|] *kut*
 yes EXST-PST-3PL overseer.MS of GEN.DEM.MS church.MS each
šabta xa b-za-le b-malhè-Ø-wa-ley.[|] *xa šabta*
 weak.FS one FUT-go-3MS FUT-kindle-3MS-PST-3PL one.MS week.FS
b-za-le Frānso,[|] *da šabta b-za-le Sāləm,*[|]
 FUT-go-3MS Franso one.FS week.FS FUT-go-3MS Salim
b-za-le b-malhè-Ø-ley.[|]
 FUT-go-3MS FUT-kindle-3MS-3PL

They used to have an overseer of the church. Every week one would go to light [the lamps]. One week Franso would go. Salem would go another week. He used to go and light [the lamps of the church].

- (17) *b-amr-i:* “*e šabta sər*⁴³*-ət mǎni-le malheta*
 FUT-say-3PL DEM.FSG week.FS turn-of who=COP.3MS kindle.VN
ṛabban Mār-ʔAprəm?”
 monk.MS saint-Ephrem

“Whose turn is it this week to light the monastery?” they would ask.

*masalan*⁴⁴ *b-amr-i Ḥamīd-ile.*[|]
 for.example FUT-say-3PL Hamid=COP.3MS

For example, they would say it was Hamid’s.

⁴³ K. < sir > *sər* (Chyet 2003, 552), cf. C. Barwar *sərr* (Khan 2008, 1392).

⁴⁴ Arb. مثلاً *maṭalan* ‘for example.’

- (18) “sì[|] málhe-ley ʔəš-ʔumṛa,[|] lábəl-ley deywane, sì!”
 go.IMP kindle.IMP-3PL on-church.MS take.IMP-3PL crazy.PL go.IMP
 “Go and light the lamps at the church! Take the insane people and go!”

- (19) b-qayəm-Ø-wa b-zà-wa-le.[|] b-zá-wa-le ʔaw sawora
 FUT-rise-3MS-PST FUT-go-PST-3MS FUT-go-PST-3MS DEM.MS overseer.MS
 b-labál-wa-le ʔan deywane nqid-e hatxa ʔidata,
 FUT-take-PST-3MS DEM.PL crazy.PL chained-PL so hand.F.PL
 l-itàn?[|]

NEG-EXST

Then he would go. That overseer would go to take along the insane people with their hands chained like this, isn't it?

lá yar-i-wa ɬar-í-wa-ley,[|] b-arq-i-wa batṛ-ət nàše.[|]
 NEG dare-3PL-st let-3PL-PST-3PL FUT-run-3PL-PST after-of person.PL
 ʔi-labl-i-wa madmāx-i-wa gāw-u.[|]
 IND-take-3PL-PST cause.sleep-3PL-PST in-3MS

They did not dare set them free, lest they would run after people. They took them to put them to bed.

našwate bt-aw-i-wa⁴⁵ tāmàha[|] w-ani
 relative.PL FUT-sit-3PL-PST yonder and-DEM.PL
 b-dar-í-wa-lay b-de qubba⁴⁶
 FUT-throw-3PL-PST-3PL in-GEN.DEM.FS room.FS
 qadl-í-wa-le ɬāra bàṭr-ey.[|]
 lock-3PL-PST-3MS door.MS after-3PL

⁴⁵ Originally *ytw ‘sit’, but reanalysed as initial-weak, cf. C. Barwar ʔatwi ‘they sit’ (Khan 2008, 217).

⁴⁶ Arb. قبة *qubba* ‘dome, canopy’.

Their relatives would sit over there, while they would put them in the room [and] lock the door behind them.

qadl-í-wa-le ṭāra bātṛ-ey[|] ṭar-í-wa-ley tama.[|]

lock-3PL-PST-3MS door.ms after-3PL leave-3PL-PST-3PL there

After they locked the door behind them, they left them there.

ʿat he mnāx-le[|] ʿawa b-ate-Ø-wa b-gan-u,

REL look! healed-3MS he FUT-come-3MS-PST by-self-3MS

hatxa b-dayəq-Ø-wa l-ṭāra.[|] b-dayəq-Ø-wa

so FUT-knock-3MS-PST on-door.ms FUT-knock-3MS-PST

l-ṭāra b-amər-Ø-wa: “nāx-li!”[|]

on-door.ms FUT-say-3MS-PST healed-1SG

The one who happened to recover would come by himself knocking at the door like this. After he knocked at the door, he would say, “I am healed!”

ʿo d-lā nāx-le[|] b-amr-i-wa našwat-u

DEM.ms REL-NEG healed-1SG FUT-say-3PL-PST relative.PL-his

lā nāx-le.[|]

NEG healed-3MS

[About] the one who did not recover, their relatives would say that they did not heal.

(20) *ʿè,[|] yāle,[|] kūṭ.[|]*

yes child.PL each

Yes, indeed! Children, everyone.

ʿat-wa xa ḥāḏīd⁴⁷ hātxa[|] m-reša l-rèša.[|]

EXST-PST INDF.ms iron so from-head.ms to-head.ms

⁴⁷ Arb. حديد *ḥāḏīd* ‘iron’.

There was a piece of iron from this end to that end.

tamma dàry-a,[|] tamma dàry-a.[|] 'ay d-la
 there put.PTCP.MS there PTCP.MS DEM.FS REL-NEG
hawé-wa-la 'i-za-la dary-á-wa-la kaffiya=w[|]
 become-PST-3FS IND-go-3FS put-3FS-PST-3FS handkerchief.FS=and
hatxa ṭlaθá-bene mšamr-á-wa-la 'əll-u.[|]
 so three-times roll_up-3FS-PST-3FS on-3MS

It was fixed there, it was fixed here. A woman who would not give birth would go and throw the handkerchief. She would prostrate herself upon it (i.e., the piece of iron) three times.

kəb-a-wa mərəð⁴⁸.[|] kəb-á-wa-la mərəð gən-ax
 want-3FS-PST wish.FS want-3FS-PST-3FS wish.FS self-2MS
xza,^{|49} mäh=iwa b-ləbb-aw, b-ləbb-aw b-amr-à-wa.[|]
 see.IMP.FS what-PST.COP.3SG in-heart-her in-heart-her FUT-say-3FS-PST
 She had a wish. So, she wanted the wish. See for yourself!
 Whatever was in her heart, she would say in her heart,

- (21) “*ana 'e mərəð kəb-an mənñ-ux.[|] ya ṛabban*
 I DEM.FS wish.FS want-1FS from-2MS VOC monk.MS

Màr-ʿAṣṛəm,[|] Ø-ʿawd-ət-la mərəð-i!”
 saint-Ephrem SBJV-do-2MS-2FS wish-my

“I want this wish from you. O the monk St. Ephrem, fulfil my wish for me!”

- (22) *zá-wa-la mšamr-á-wa-le*
 go-PST-3FS roll_up-3FS-PST-3FS

⁴⁸ K. <mirad> *mərəð* ‘wish, desire.’

⁴⁹ An instance of *xzay* (34), cf. *ḥza* in Umra (Hobrack 2000, 63).

kaffīya=w[|] šabt-ət šeta hawè-wa-la.[|]

handkerchief.FS-and week.FS-of year.FS become-PST-3FS

hawé-wa-la yàl-e.[|] ʔè,[|] kəb-à-wa mərə́d.[|]

become-PST-3FS child-PL yes want-3FS-PST wish.FS

She went, rolled up the handkerchief and the same time next year she gave birth. She had children. Indeed, she wanted this.

(23) *ʔàna ʔota[|]— dá-baxta mən̄n-i nəs̄āx,[|]*

I old.woman.FS INDF.FS-woman.FS from-1SG unwell

xadèsar šənn̄e.[|] Dawədnète-wa.[|] te-la

eleven year.PL from.Dawediya.FS-PST.COP.3SG came-3FS

nəxt-ət yəmm-i,[|] te-la lwāt-i.[|] nxət-la

rest.VN-of mother-my came-3FS toward-1SG descended-3FS

tela y-àmr-a:[|]

came-3FS IND-say-3FS

I, an old woman, a sick woman [stayed] with me, for eleven years. She was from the village of Dawediya. My late mother came, she came to me. [The old woman called Naima] went down, came, saying:

(24) *“xat-i jwàn-e^{50!}”[|]*

sister.FSG-my dear-FSG

“My dear sister!”

(25) *y-amr-a: “nò?”⁵¹*

IND-say-3FS well

“Well?” my mother said.

⁵⁰ K. <ciwan> *jəwān* ‘beautiful; young’.

⁵¹ This is presumably French.

- (26) *y-àmr-a*[|] *xalto* *Ràḥe*[|] *ʔi-ba* *zer-à-le.*[|]

IND-say-3FS aunt.FS Rachel EXST-in.her visit-3FS-3MS

“Aunt Rachel says she could visit him (i.e., St. Ephrem).”

- Ø-ʔ*amr-a*: “*àna* Ø-ʔ*amr-an* *lal-u,*[|] *mà le*

SBJV-say-3FS I SBJV-say-1FS to-3MS Q NEG

- mahw-at-u* *ma hawe-lax* *xà-brona* *xena.*[|]

give.birth-2FS-and Q become-2FS INDF.M-son.MS another.MS

She says, “I would tell him, why don’t you give birth and have another son?”

- (27) *y-amr-a*: “*mà ʔawd-an?*[|] *xāf*⁵² Ø-ʔ*awy-a* *bràta.*[|]

IND-say-3FS Q do-1FS maybe SBJV-be-3FS girl.FS

“What am I to do?” she said. “I fear it might be a girl.”

- (28) Ø-ʔ*amr-a*: “*là,*[|] *ʔjbon*⁵³-*ət* *ʔalàha.*[|]

SBJV-say-3FS no pleasure.MS-of God.MS

“No, [it is up to] God’s pleasure,” she said.

- (29) *y-amr-a-la*: “*mūr-a* *xalto* *Ràḥe*[|] *za-la* *lwat*

IND-say-3FS-3FS say-3FS aunt.FS Rachel go-3FS toward

- qaddiša* *zer-a-le* *lal-i.*[|]

saint.MS visit-3FS-3MS for-1SG

She said to her, “Tell aunt Rachel to go to the saint for me, that she may visit him for me.”

⁵² From Iraqi Arabic *xāf* ‘maybe’, originally *xāyaf* ‘afraid’ (Woodhead and Beene 1967, 149).

⁵³ Arb. عجب *ʔb* ‘please; amaze.’

har ʿat lèwat bə-praqa mən-n-i.ᵀ holax
 always you.SG NEG.COP.2SG in-finish.INF from-1SG DEIX.COP.2FS

már-əll-i mète-lax,ᵀ xa təfla mètelaᵀ!
 say.INF-OBJ-1SG bring.IMP-2FS INDF.M child.MS bring.IMP-2FS

You never stop [asking] me. You keep telling me to bring forth a child, bring forth a child!”

(hola mar-əll-i yəmm-i kore ʿāna.)ᵀ
 DEIX.COP.3FS say.INF-OBJ-1SG mother-my blind I

([She taught,] if my mother keeps telling me, I would go blind.)

“xalt-i Ràḥe,ᵀ har yəmm-ət Marqus, hola
 aunt.FS-my Rachel every mother-of Marqus DEIX.COP.3FS

mara lāl-i,ᵀ ʿəl ma le peyš-at Arb.ḥāmāl^{Arb.?}ᵀ
 say.INF to-1SG for what NEG become-2FS carrying

“Aunt Rachel, the mother of Marqus, keeps saying to me, “Why aren’t you getting pregnant?””

(30) *qəm-la y-àmr-a,ᵀ “ʿana mwàt-i,ᵀ ʿana mwàt-i pare*
 rose-3FS IND-say-3FS I from-1SG I from-1SG money.PL

mwàt-i b-dary-án-wa-le,ᵀ bas lazəm” —yəmm-i-la
 from-1SG FUT-put-1FS-PST-1MS only must mother-my=COP.3FS

mara—ᵀ y-amr-a lazəm mən kədd-ət bàbu,ᵀ mən
 say.INF IND-say-3FS must from at-of father from

kədd-aw yaw-à-leᵀ Arb.ḥatta^{Arb.} l-alaha Arb.qàbəl^{Arb.}
 at-3FS give-3FS-3MS so.that to-God.MS acceptable

Then she said, “I from myself, I would give my own money from myself, but she must”—my mother is saying—she says she gives it from what’s with father, from what’s with her, so that it may be acceptable to God.

*b-aqquta*⁵⁴ *qam* 'alàha.[|] *b-aqquta qam* 'alàha,[|]

in-truth.FS before God.MS in-truth.FS before God.MS

l-ət-lax *mawmata* 'əll-i,[|] *b-ayya* na'me⁵⁵

NEG-EXST-2FS oath.F.PL on-1SG in-DEM.FS blessing.FS

ṭ-ile 'alaha *xliq*⁵⁶-əll-aw,[|]

REL-COP.3MS God.MS created.PTCP.MS-OBJ-3FS

I swear before God. I swear before God, while you do not have something to make me swear, I swear on this blessing that God has created,

zər-a *yəmm-i* *Maṛ-ʿAṣṣəṣ l-è* *baxta*.[|]

visited-3FS mother-my saint-Ephrem to-DEM.FS woman.FS

that my mother did visit the church of St. Ephrem for that woman.

(31) *fət-la*.[|] 'ət-wa-lan *xà* *xərrīj*⁵⁷=iwa[|]

passed-3FS EXST-PST-1PL INDF.M graduate=PST.COP.3SG

y-amr-ī-wa-le *Mu'ayyad* *lwat-i* *tíwe-wa*,

IND-say-3PL-PST-3MS Muayyad with-1SG settled.MS-PST.COP.3SG

l-itàn?[|] *ma* *ṭ-iwa* *šàṭər*,[|] *ma* *ṭ-iwa*

NEG-EXST what REL-PST.COP.3SG clever what REL-PST.COP.3SG

hawnàna,[|] *hadax* 'aqəl⁵⁸=iwa *y-amr-a* 'àhəd

smart so intelligent=PST.COP.3SG IND-say-3FS promise

y-amr-a.[|]

IND-say-3FS

⁵⁴ *b-* 'in' + *haqquta* 'truth'.

⁵⁵ Arb. نعمة *ni'ma*.

⁵⁶ Arb. خلق *xliq* 'create'.

⁵⁷ Arb. حريج *xarrij* 'graduate'.

⁵⁸ Arb. عقل *aql* 'mind; reason'.

It passed. We used to have a graduate called Muayyad living with me. Wasn't it? How clever he was, how smart he was, so intelligent that she promised saying,

- (32) “*ʔən hawe-li xa brona, Ø-matw-an šəmm-u*
 if become-1SG INDF.MS son.MS SBJV-put-1FS name.MS-his
Muʿayyad. | šəmm-ət daw yala, l-itən?”¹
 Muayyad name.MS-of GEN.3MS child.MS NEG-EXST
 “If I ever gave birth to a son, I would give him the name
 Muayyad, the name of this child, isn't it?”
*šabt-ət šeta hwe-la bròna.*¹
 week-of year.FS gave.birth-3FS son.MS
 The same time the following year she gave birth to a son.

- (33) *y-amr-a: “ʔa xalto Raḥe, Maṭ-Maryam yaw-à-lax.”*
 IND-say-3FS INJ aunt.FS Rachel saint.FS-Maryam.FS give-3FS-2FS
 She said, “Oh Aunt Rachel, may St. Mary bless you!”

- (34) *y-amr-an: “xzay! mà mər-i lal-ax?”*¹
 IND-say-1FS see.IMP.FS Q said-1SG to-2FS
 “See! Didn't I tell you?” I said.

- (35) *zər-a yəmm-i lal-aw. | zəra yəmm-i*
 visited-3FS mother-my to-3FS visited-3FS mother-my
*ʔaw dəra ləl-aw.*¹
 DEM.MS monastery.MS to-3FS
 My mother went to visit for her. After my mother visited
 that monastery for her,
y-àmr-a, | zəl-la yəmm-i— | y-amr-a:
 IND-say-3FS went-3FS mother-my IND-say-3FS
 she said—my mother went there, and said—,

- (36) “*ya ʿallā-w ya ʾrabban Maṛ-ʾĀṣrēm!*”[|]

VOC God.MS=and VOC monk.MS saint-Ephrem

“Dear God and dear the monk St. Ephrem!”

ʾayya baxt-ət nxət-la-w mər-a lal-i,[|]

DEM.FS woman.FS-of descended-3FS=and said-3FS to-1SG

xàkma mər-a lal-i.[|] “*awwa mēndi Ø-matw-an-ne*

INDF.PL said-3FS to-1SG DEM.MS think.MS SBJV-put-1FS-3MS

š-xapr-ət ʾət ʾrabban Maṛ-ʾĀṣrēm,[|] *ʾay mərād*

on-pit.MS-of of monk saint-Ephrem DEM.FS wish.FS

ṭ-ila b-ləbb-ət de baxta b-ḥaṣl⁵⁹-ət-ta.”[|]

REL-COP.3FS in-heart-of GEN.FS woman.FS FUT-fulfil-2MS-3FS

This woman who went down told me, a few [times] she said to me, “I would like to put this thing on the pit of St. Ephrem, and so please fulfil the wish that is in the heart of that woman.”

- (37) *ʾāmen! ṭūb qam-ux ʾrab-u ʾalāh-i,*[|]

amen blessed before-2MS lord.MS=and God.MS-my

šabt-ət šeta te-lay naše m-qārwan.[|]

week.FS-of year.FS came-3PL person.PL from-caravan.FS

Amen! Blessed are you, my Lord and God! The same time next year people came from a caravan.

- (38) *y-amr-an-ney: “Ø-ʾamr-ūtən-na yəmm-i ʾət-la*

IND-say-1FS-3PL SBJV-say-2PL-3FS mother-my EXST-3FS

Naʿīma xa brōna.”[|]

Naima INDF.M son.MS

⁵⁹ Arb. حصل *ḥaṣṣala* ‘cause to happen’.

I told them, “You are to tell my mother that Naima has a son.”

- (39) ʔè,[|] y-amr-i lâl-aw:[|] “àt![|] xzày![|]

yes IND-say-3PL to-3FS you.SG see.IMP.FS

She was told, “You! See!

la mār-i lal-ax mutte-lax mutte-lax xa

NEG said-1SG to-2FS brought-2FS brought-2FS INDF.M

Mu‘àyyad?”

Muayyad

Didn’t I tell you you would give birth, you would give birth to one Muayyad?”

- (40) y-amr-a, “bāle šəmm-ət dawwa jiràn-an[|]—

IND-say-3FS si name.MS-of GEN.DEM.MS neighbour.MS-our

’awwa Mu‘àyyad šàṭər=ile,[|] ʔè,[|] ṭ-ile

DEM.MS Muayyad clever-COP.3MS yes REL-COP.3MS

tiw-a gu dè qubba[|]— hawe-li brona

seated.PTCP-MS in GEN.FS room.FS EXST-1SG son.MS

Ø-matw-an-ne šəmm-u Mu‘àyyad,[|] ʔè.”[|]

SBJV-put-1FS-3MS name.MS-his Muayyad yes

She said, “Alright, as for the name of this neighbour of ours—this Muayyad is very clever, yes, the one who lives in this room—If I have a son, I will give him the name Muayyad, indeed.”

(41) ʾaw bena, ʿəš-lan m-ʿalma,[|] bràt-i.[|]

DEM.MS time.MS lived-1PL from-crowd.MS daughter.FS-my

kabira ʿəš-lan m-naše.

much lived-1PL from-people.PL

At that time we lived with a crowd, my daughter. We lived with lots of people.

xze-lan naše ʔàw-e=w xze-lan naše là

saw-1PL people.PL good-PL=and saw-1PL people.PL NEG

ʔaw-e,[|] ^{Arb.}bas zāmān^{Arb.}.[|]

good-PL only time.MS

We have seen both good and bad people, but time takes its toll.

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RELATING MORPHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIETY IN MODERN HEBREW TO NEO-ARAMAIC*

Lidia Napiorkowska

In this paper, I wish to discuss selected similarities between spoken Modern Hebrew (MH) and the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialects. First, I will represent the variation among the verbal forms in the two languages as a cline correlated with metalinguistic parameters, including geographical location, register, and sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors. I will argue that the diversity among the NENA dialects parallels the variety of verbal renditions in spoken MH. Next, I will address some corresponding developments within the verbal domain in the two languages, compared to earlier or more conservative varieties, focusing on phonological and morphological processes and their outcomes. The comparison will reveal some similar tendencies in spoken MH and NENA, which I take to be indicative of their typological status as modern spoken Semitic languages.

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1.0. Modern Hebrew and North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic: Similarities and Differences

Modern Hebrew and Neo-Aramaic (NA) are the only survivors of the North-Western sub-branch of Semitic. In this paper, I will focus mainly on spoken MH and the NENA subgroup of NA. The modern social history of the two languages differs in many respects. MH is the result of the vernacularisation of a purely written late pre-modern variety of Hebrew, itself revived as a linguistic vehicle of culture during the centuries of the *Haskala* ‘(Jewish) enlightenment’, whereas Aramaic has always been a spoken vernacular of the Jewish and Christian communities in the Middle East. Despite these differences, the two languages share a remarkable number of linguistic features within the domain of phonology, syntax, and lexicon (Sabar 1999), both being subject to extensive language contact (Kapeliuk 1996) and borrowing from one another (Khalaily and Doron 2018).¹ The research reveals that MH and NENA preserve their overall Semitic profiles (Hopkins 2005) and the changes observed in the development of the two languages are suggestive of the shared typological direction of the modern Semitic languages.

In this paper, I wish to contribute to the above suggestion by addressing some of the similarities between spoken MH and NENA occurring in the verbal domain. I will try to demonstrate

¹ Borrowing from NENA into MH does not occur extensively; nevertheless, Khalaily and Doron (2018, 124) believe the NENA dialects to be the origin of MH doubly-marked interrogatives. See also Khan (2005) for similarities between Biblical Hebrew and NA.

that the parallel developments in MH and NENA obtain, in addition to the above, also on the fine-grained level of morphophonology and morphology. Additionally, I will suggest that developments in the two languages are gradable and that the gradation may be related to metalinguistic factors. In the case of MH, speaker background and register diversity will be discussed, whereas for NENA it will be the geographical distribution and religious denominations of the communities. I will argue that a similar spectrum of features conditioning verbal form may be postulated for both languages. Such a correlation has been widely accepted for NENA. Here, however, I wish to compare the situation among the NENA dialects with sociolinguistic variation in MH. In other words, just as the correlation between the verbal form and the dialectal context obtains in NENA, so the verbal rendition and its (meta)linguistic context forms a cline in MH, progressing from the standard and more conservative to the most casual and innovative form.

The data employed in the analysis of the MH verbal forms are drawn from CoSIH² and my own fieldwork; similarly, the data on NENA have been obtained from available grammatical descriptions of particular dialects, an online database, and my own recordings.³ This study focuses on morphological and morpho-

² Examples from CoSIH are referenced with the corpus file code.

³ The following sources were used for the NENA linguistic examples analysed in the article (C. = Christian, J. = Jewish): J. Arbel (Khan 1999), J. Betanure (Mutzafi 2008a), Bne-Lagippa (NENA Database Project, contributor Roberta Borghero), C. Bohtan (Fox 2009), J. Challa

phonological innovations, rather than the frequency of occurrence of particular verbs or verbal roots; for example, the MH verb *tamah* ‘be awed’ is poorly attested in the spoken register; nevertheless, it illustrates the behaviour of the historical final-*h* verbal class and is, therefore, included in the analysis. Additionally, the NENA dialects display a degree of variation in the rendition of the verbal forms, both in their form, e.g., *bnye* ~ *ḫaye* ~ *ḫae* ‘(that) he wants’ or *syṁax* ~ *ṣemax* ‘(that) we fast’ (C. Diyana), and in the rate of occurrence of particular lexical verbal items. However, since the present analysis seeks to capture shared tendencies and to illustrate possible directions of development, it is the attested verbal form in its morphological and phonological shape, rather than frequency, that I consider valid and meaningful. In my comparison, I take the written/standard form of MH as a benchmark for the normative, diachronically earlier, and typologically more conservative language. Similarly, I regard earlier stages of Aramaic as more original; moreover, it is often the case that the more conservative forms occur in dialects closer to the historical centre of the NENA-speaking area, stretching from south-eastern Turkey through northern Iraq and to north-western Iran. The dialects may be further subdivided into groups or clusters, for example, the Jewish Lishana Deni dialects of the Mosul plain (Mutzafi 2008a, 10), the Christian Urmi

(Fassberg 2009), C. Diyana (Napiorkowska 2015), C. Hassana (NENA Database Project, contributor Alinda Damsma), C. Karamlesh (NENA Database Project, contributor Roberta Borghero), J. Sulemaniyya (Khan 2004), C. Qaraqosh (Khan 2002), C. Urmi (Khan 2016), J. Urmi (Khan 2008), J. Sanandaj (Khan 2009), J. Zakho (Aloni 2022).

cluster (Khan 2016), or the progressive Trans-Zab Jewish dialects (Mutzafi 2008b), which display similar features. Thus, with regard to phonology and some aspects of verbal morphology, such as the number of verbal stems, historical classes of verbs or verbal morphosyntax, the dialects on the Mosul plain and north of it, may be regarded as more archaic (see Molin 2024, 5–9 for J. Dohuk morphosyntax). In some other respects, it is the ‘fringe’ dialects that display less progressive features, such as Qaraqosh (Khan 2007, 7; Kim 2008, 513ff.), especially when constituent alignment is concerned (Coghill 2016, 56-7). Some dialects are as a result more conservative in one respect and progressive in another, e.g., J. Urmi progressive phonology versus more archaic constituent alignment. Overall, however, the occurrences of the NENA verbal forms may be compared to more standard/earlier forms and correlated with the sociolinguistic metadata.

To illustrate the processes discussed, I have selected verbal forms which could easily be compared and contrasted. Needless to say, a more thorough study would reveal a greater number of structural similarities and differences. Moreover, a larger sample of Neo-Semitic languages is likely to reveal some further parallels; this, however, lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

2.0. Diversity in Modern Hebrew and NENA as a Spectrum of Features

2.1. Geographical Distribution and Community Lifestyle in NENA Dialects

Before analysing verbal forms in MH and NENA, let us first consider sociolinguistic diversity in the two languages and establish parameters for comparison. NENA, which is, in fact, a group of languages, is the most internally diverse of all NA groups. Two principal factors contributing to this diversity may be highlighted, the first one being geographical location, and the second the lifestyle of the dialectal communities. As mentioned above, the speakers of NENA once occupied territories stretching from south-eastern Turkey to north-western Iran, dwelling in both remote villages and lively towns. In the majority of these locations, there developed unique varieties of NENA, whereby the urban dialects were more exposed to the influence of other languages, whereas the rural varieties tended to be more secluded. It follows that location correlated with degree of isolation and exposure to contact with other languages and, as a consequence, heavily impacted the linguistic shape of the dialects.

Another correlation obtained between religious confession and lifestyle of the communities. NENA speakers belonged to the Jewish faith and several eastern Christian denominations, with Jews working mainly as pedlars and Christians occupying themselves with husbandry. For instance, in the town of Urmi, Jews worked in trade and, consequently, had more contact with the outer world than did Christians speaking their dialect of Urmi,

who originally came from more remote villages (Khan 2008, 2–3). We may thus compare the NENA dialects where we find two communities within the same location, e.g., in Urmi or Sanandaj, and conclude that the Jewish dialects, often originally urban varieties, evolved into linguistically progressive varieties due to more intense contact with the surrounding communities and other languages, as against the Christian dialects, whose speakers often migrated from different locations (Khan 2007, 7; 2008, 3). Accordingly, throughout the NENA-speaking area, we observe the diachronic and typological development of linguistic features. On the level of phonology, which has a bearing on verbal morphophonology, dialects located closer to the centre of the area tended to display a more conservative profile, whereas varieties on the outskirts demonstrated innovative developments, such as the Trans-Zab Jewish dialects or C. Bohtan and Van from south-eastern Turkey (cf. Khan 2003, 183; 2007, 7–8; 2008, 9–11).

This is not to say that progressive linguistic features are restricted to dialects from cities and the outskirts of the NENA area. Nor is it true that the Christian dialects, especially those historically rooted more towards the historical centre, fail to display linguistic developments. In fact, the NENA dialects form an intricate map of features. However, a general tendency toward such distribution of conservatism and innovations may be observed.

As an illustration of the diversity of NENA, consider the evolution of the root **šmʿ* > **šməʿle* ‘he heard’ in the following dialects:⁴

Table 1: The verb ‘he heard’ in selected NENA dialects

J. Betanure	J. Challa	C. Qaraqosh	C. Urmi	C. Diyana	J. Urmi	J. Sanandaj
<i>šmeʿle</i>	<i>šmeʿle</i>	<i>šməʿlə</i>	<i>šmilə</i>	<i>šmile</i>	<i>šmele</i>	<i>šmele</i>
<i>šmʿ</i>	<i>šmʿ</i>	<i>šmʿ</i>	<i>šmʿ ~ šmy</i>	<i>šmy</i>	<i>šmy</i>	<i>šmy</i>
NE Iraq	NE Iraq	NE Iraq	NW Iran	NE Iraq	NW Iran	NW Iran

It may be noted that, as we progress from west to east, the dialects display a departure from the original form. Whereas the more progressive dialects lost their original pharyngeals totally, some of the more conservative have preserved them in certain circumstances or lexical items, which directly impacted the verbal form and the root. As a result, in the former group, the verb ‘hear’ shifted from the original final-*ʿ* class to final-*y*. The differences between the roots or verbal forms across different dialects become even more apparent when we consider high-frequency verbs prone to phonetic erosion, such as the present form of the verb ‘go’ < **ʾazəl*:

Table 2: The verb ‘go’ in selected NENA dialects

C. Bohtan	J. Zakho	C. Karamlesh	C. Diyana	J. Arbel
<i>yozu</i>	<i>g-ezəl</i>	<i>k-zələ</i>	<i>ʾi-azəl ~ y-azəl</i>	<i>kiz</i>
SE Turkey	NW Iraq	NW Iraq	NE Iraq	NE Iraq

The reduction of the verbal root in the more peripheral dialects leaves only one former radical identifiable on the surface level. The different forms of the indicative/present prefixes *k-* and *ʾi-* also display varying degrees of bonding with the verbal form. For

⁴ Vowel length is marked in NENA only on short vowels in open stressed syllables (which are, by rule, long).

example, in C. Diyana, the indicative present and the subjunctive forms bear close resemblance, whereas in J. Sanandaj, the prefix of the indicative causes elision of the initial syllable and is attached to the historical second radical consonant; cf. C. Diyana indicative *ʔi-ḅxəl* and subjunctive *ʔḅxəl* versus J. Sanandaj indicative *kxəl* versus subjunctive *ʔaxəl* ‘eat’.

However, in addition to dialect location, register plays a role: some forms and processes display a high degree of conservatism, motivated by close connection to the higher register and liturgical use. Thus, in the dialect of C. Qaraqosh, words belonging to the domain of the Christian religion, under the influence of Classical Syriac (Khan 2002, 41), escaped the general shift **ḥ > /x/*, e.g., *mšīḥa* ‘the Messiah’, *təšbuḥta* ‘praise’. The latter word renders a native denominal verb *tašboḥə* ‘to praise’, preserving the original guttural consonant, whereas roots with */ḥ/* are otherwise of Arabic origin. In J. Urmi, in a similar fashion, the overall shift **ḏ > /l/* did not take place in the case of the basic word of ethnic and religious identity *+huda* ‘Jew’. These lexical-phonological exceptions illustrate the complex nature of the dialects, containing both progressive and archaic features, depending on geographical and sociolinguistic factors.

It may be observed that the NENA dialects form a spectrum of features, where morphophonological features progress from the more original ones in the west or centre towards the more advanced ones found in the varieties towards the east and the outskirts (compare the isoglosses drawn by Kim 2008). We may also conclude that sociolinguistic factors, such as location, lifestyle, and degree of isolation of the dialectal community, shape

the linguistic features. Additionally, the religious dimension of the community plays a role in preserving archaic forms. It needs to be borne in mind, however, that the dialectal map of the NENA dialects is more complicated than a steady cline of features or dichotomic divisions based on location or confession. We may, thus, find innovative features in the otherwise conservative dialects. Nonetheless, considering the morphophonological tendencies exemplified above, I wish to claim that a similar array of verbal features may be observed in MH, where sociolinguistic and pragmatic parameters determine fidelity to, or departure from, conservative forms.

2.2. Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Diversity in Modern Hebrew

Turning to MH—in historical perspective, we may construe its synchronic diversity as a result of two different trends, i.e., the revival of the literary language in Europe in the eighteenth century, on the one hand, and its nineteenth-century vernacularisation as a spoken variety in Palestine/Eretz Yisrael, on the other. As a result of these changes, MH displays different registers of formality and is, moreover, used by a diverse speech community in different social contexts (Reshef 2020) and at different levels of fluency (Henkin 2020). Among variants based on genre, social status, and ethnic or religious distinction, the difference between the written and spoken language appears to intersect all other distinctions and impact the entire language community. This dichotomy may be otherwise captured as a distinction between the

formal and informal registers or prepared speech versus spontaneous speech (Izre'el 2000–2001, 106–7).

An analysis of the differences between the prescriptive and authentic usage in MH reveals morphophonological changes in an otherwise conservative verbal system (according to, for example, Schwarzwald 2011, 527; Rubin 2020, 43); cf. normative החליט *heḥeliṭ/hexeliṭ* versus /^hexlit/ 'he decided' or תאספי *ta'asfi* versus /teesfi/ 'you (FS) will gather'.⁵ As an illustration of the variety of factors conditioning the spoken renditions of some verbal forms we may consider the form ואעבור *ve-e'evor* 'and I will go over' in (4), originally containing the voiced pharyngeal fricative (ʕe'evor), which, however, turned into a glottal stop in general MH. This form surfaces as /vevoʕ/ (C412ND), adduced by a translator of literature in casual speech. A most likely age-driven difference obtains between the standard form נלך *nelex* 'we will go' (C711_4) when spoken by a father of a family in (5a) and a spoken form *nilex* (C842) when uttered by a young adult (5b). In addition to age, a speaker's social position should be noted, where a senior speaker, an officer, renders the future form of the verb לעזור 'to help' as תעזור */taʔazor/* 'you will help' (6a), originally also with /^h/ *ta'azor*, as in ex. (4), while the cadet, his junior, uses the more casual form of the same root יעזור */yazʕu/* 'they will help' with omission of the glottal stop (C931_1) (6b):

⁵ As a matter of fact, according to a recent decision taken by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, the inflection of this verb as *te'esfi*, *te'esfu*, is now accepted, see <https://hebrew-academy.org.il/wp-content/uploads/meeting179-180.pdf>.

Table 3: Standard versus spoken verbal forms in MH

	Written/ standard	Spoken MH	Sociolinguistic metadata
	<i>ve-ʿeʿevor</i>		translator of literature, casual speech situation
(4)	<i>ve-ʿeʿevor</i>	/vevov/	(C412ND)
			ואעבור ‘and I will go over’
(5a)	<i>nelex</i>	/nelex/	father of a family talking to his children
(5b)		/nilex/	young adult taking to a friend
			נלך ‘we will go’
(6a)	<i>taʿazor</i>	/taʔazov/	military commander, careful speech (C931_1)
	<i>taʿazor</i>		תעזור ‘you will help’
(6b)	<i>yaʿazru</i>	/yazvu/	cadet, casual speech (C931_1)
	<i>yaʿazru</i>		יעזרו ‘they will help’

Even though MH is a single language and NENA is a diverse group of varieties, both languages may be depicted as containing verbal forms gradually shifting from the more conservative to the progressive, depending on metalinguistic conditioning. Thus, as in the case of NENA, there is more to MH diversity than a dichotomy between the formal and informal registers.⁶ The renditions of the verbal forms available in the spoken corpus and in my fieldwork data depict the variety of forms on the morphophonological level, forming a similar spectrum of features as in the NENA dialects. This diversity may be illustrated by the following continuum of renditions of normative מבין *mevin* ‘he understands’:

mevin > *mivin*⁷ > *məvin* > *mʷvin*

⁶ This diversity has been variously captured by scholars. For instance, Blanc (1968, 242–43) distinguishes between the untutored, average informal, average formal, and elevated registers.

⁷ This verb may also have the form *mavin*, see ex. (28) below.

The forms differing from the standard belong to the common and lower register; however, beyond level of formality, they are conditioned by pragmatic factors, such as speech rate. The faster the rate, the more likely the assimilation of the first vowel to the stem vowel /i/ and the contraction, then elision of the vowel.⁸ Thus, sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors contribute to the gradual departure from the prescribed form. Exs (7a)–(7e) present a continuum of renditions of the normative *אעשה* 'e'eše (originally also with the pharyngeal, i.e., 'e'eše) 'I will do', from /ʔease/ and /ʔaʔase/, produced by a single speaker of Israeli origin in a casual situation (7a)–(7b), to 'a'aše, audible at onset with a long vowel in creaky voice /a:se/, adduced by a street vendor of Arab origin (C1422b) (7c). Although the examples in (7) illustrate various degrees of elision and contraction, (7d) appears in the specific environment of a question, where, for pragmatic reasons, the nuclear stress is on the first element of the utterance.⁹ The same speaker later produces the form /taʔase/ in a declarative utterance at a slower speech rate (7e), demonstrating that pragmatic factors influence surface forms of the verb:

⁸ This is based not on acoustic measurements, but on observations of language use and in keeping with general tendencies of speech production.

⁹ Ex. (7c) is phonetically similar to (7c), which could in turn be considered an allophone of the (7e) forms with /'/.

Table 4: Internal variation of forms in MH

	MH written/ standard	MH spoken	Sociolinguistic metadata
(7a)		/ʔease/	Hebrew native speaker of
(7b)	ʔeʔeše	/ʔaʔase/	Israeli origin
(7c)	ʔeʔeše	/a:se ~ ʔaʔase/	Arab background, produce vendor, C1422b אעשה 'I will do'
(7d)	ma ʔani ʔeʔeše ma ʔani ʔeʔeše	/màʔni ʔaseʔ¹/	Arab background, produce vendor, C1422b ?מה אני אעשה? 'what shall I do?'
(7e)	taʔaše taʔaše taʔaše hešbòn¹ taʔaše hešbòn¹	/taʔase/	Arab background, produce vendor, C1422b תעשה 'you will do' תעשה חשבון 'do the counting'

I would like to suggest that that the variation in MH parallels the dialectal continuum of NENA, as it forms a range of features closer to or further away from the conservative form, as could be postulated also for many other language varieties. Construing the forms as a spectrum of features conditioned by sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors eases the tension between the prescribed norm and the substandard. In a similar way to NENA, thus, verbal forms in spoken MH may be viewed as results of diachronic evolution on a microscale. Our comparison emphasises the fact that departures from the standard in spoken MH illustrate valid tendencies in language development in a particular sociolinguistic context, rather than merely casual or untutored speech. Having suggested a comparative model for capturing the variety in both languages, I will analyse some developments among the MH and NENA verbs.

3.0. Shifts and Mergers in Modern Hebrew and NENA Verbs

In the following, I compare selected shifts and mergers of verbal classes and stems in spoken MH and the NENA dialects. It will be argued that the changes occur in similar morphological areas, often triggered by the same phonological and morphophonological processes, and can thus be regarded as a common typological direction for modern spoken Semitic languages.

3.1. The Original Gutturals *ʾ and *ʿ

The most apparent similarity concerns the historical gutturals *ʾ and *ʿ, which display similar behaviour in all positions. Some of the changes occurred in previous stages of language development, while others are more recent; however, the resulting surface forms of spoken MH and NENA display interesting parallels.

The tendency towards dropping original *ʾ, as well as the glottal stop that developed from a weakened *ʿ in initial position, is widespread, as in (8)–(9). The weakening is further evidenced by forms with prefixes, where no glottal stop is present between the prefix and the rest of the stem. Compare the MH and NENA allegro forms in (10)–(11):

Table 5: Elision of *ʿ and *ʾ in initial position in NENA and MH

MH written/ standard MH spoken		Earlier Aramaic	C. Diyana
(8)	^ʾ <i>asaf</i> /asaf/ אסף 'he gathered'	(9)	^ʿ <i>rəqle</i> /rəqqe/ 'he ran'
(10)	<i>naʿuf</i> > <i>naʾuf</i> /nauf/ נעוי 'we will fly'	(11)	^ʾ <i>axəl</i> /b-ʔoxəl ~ ʔ-oxəl/ '(that) he eats' 'he will eat'

In (11), the glottal stop is clearly assimilated to the prefix, rendering it a voiceless unaspirated /p̥/, instead of the original /b/.

In MH, /ʔ/ is even dropped in intervocalic position with the prefix, resulting in a diphthong (10). In medial position, *ʔ and *ʕ shifted to /y/ in most dialects in NENA, e.g., *tʔm > tym ‘to taste (TR)’ in C. Diyana. However, in some verbs, especially in the more progressive dialects, like J. Sanandaj (13b), (15a), (17b), but also often in C. Diyana (19b), the glide is dropped, resulting in forms similar to those in MH (14b), (18b):

Table 6: Elision of *ʕ and *ʔ in medial position in NENA and MH

Verbal class	MH written/standard	MH spoken	Earlier Aramaic	NENA
II-ʔ	(12a) koʔev כואב ‘it hurts’	(12b) /koev/	(13a) *qaʕam ‘(that) he stands’	(13b) /qem/ (J. Sanandaj)
II-ʔ, III-y	(14a) roʔe רואה ‘he sees’	(14b) /ʔoe/	—	(15a) /dæe/ (J. Sanandaj) ¹⁰ ‘(that) he hits’
II-ʕ	(16a) toʕem טועם ‘he tastes’	(16b) /toem/	(17a) *šaʕš > šayāš ‘(that) he rocks’	(17b) /šeš/ (J. Sanandaj)
II-ʕ, III-y	(18a) toʕe טועה ‘he errs’	(18b) /toe/	(19a) *baʕe ‘(that) he wants’	(19b) /ṣpaye ~ ṣpae/ (C. Diyana)

Despite the differences in the vowel quality, the resulting forms display no surface-level middle consonant.

Consider also the transition of the final-ʔ verbs to the final-y class in the verb ‘to read’ in spoken MH and NENA:

¹⁰ This verb is of Kurdish origin, thus no earlier Aramaic form is available.

Table 7: Merger of final *ʾ and final-y class in NENA and MH

Verbal class	MH written/ stand-ard	MH spoken	Earlier Aramaic	C. Diyana
III-y	(20a) <i>qone</i> , <i>qona</i> ¹¹ קונה 'he buys', קונה 'she buys'	(20b) /kone/, /kona/	(21a) * <i>xaze</i> , * <i>xazyā</i> '(that) he sees', '(that) she sees'	(21b) /xaze/, /xazyā/ '(that) he sees', '(that) she sees'
III-alef	(22a) <i>qoreʾ</i> , <i>qoreʾt</i> קורא 'he reads', קוראת 'she reads'	(22b) /koʾe/, /koʾa/	(23a) * <i>qareʾ</i> , * <i>qarʾa</i> '(that) he reads', '(that) she reads'	(23b) /qareʾ/, /qarʾa/ '(that) he reads', '(that) she reads'

Original verbs with the final ʾ, due to the loss of this guttural, shift to the final-y class, by analogy with the MS form, cf. /kone/, /kona/ (*qny*) :: /koʾe/ > /koʾa/ (*qrʾ*) in MH and /xaze/, /xazyā/ (*xzy*) :: /qareʾ/ > /qarʾa/ (*xzy*) in C. Diyana. The merger of the classes in spoken MH is further operative with different forms, roots, and stems, such as inflection of the future, where omission of the glottal stop results in a form of the final-y class, by analogy to the masculine form, i.e., /tikne/, /tikni/ 'you (MS) will buy', 'you (FS) will buy' (< *qny*) :: /tikʾa/, /tikʾi/ 'you (MS) will read', 'you (FS) will read' (< *qrʾ*). The merger is also visible in the transition of some of spoken MH infinitives to the final-y class:

¹¹ In a similar way to the pharyngeal fricative above, the /q/ and /ʕ/ phonemes are not features of general MH, but rather shifted, respectively, to /k/ and /ts/. The spelling here reflects transliteration, indicating the historical relation of certain verbal roots to those of Aramaic.

Table 8: Merger of final-ʾ and final-y infinitives in NENA and MH

Verbal class	MH written/ standard	MH spoken	Earlier Aramaic	C. Diyana
III-y	(24a) <i>liqnot</i> לִקְנוֹת ‘to buy’	(24b) /liknot/	(25a) *xzaya	(25b) /xzaya/ ‘to see’
III-ʾ	(26a) <i>ləhitxabeʾ</i> <i>ləhithabeʾ</i> לִהְתַּחבֵּא ‘to hide oneself’	(26b) /leʔitxabot/	(27a) *qraʾa	(27b) /qraya/ ‘to read’

In (25b) and (27b), /y/ surfaces as a radical consonant in NENA and the verb in (26b) is ascribed to the final-y class in spoken MH. And whereas in the previous examples of spoken MH the weakening and elision of the glottal stop renders a phonetically conditioned similarity, this shift operates on the morphological level.¹² It should, however, be noted that in MH the phenomenon is lexically conditioned.¹³ By contrast, the shift to the final-y class is complete and regular in NENA, encompassing the entire inflection and stems in many dialects.

Finally, mention should be made of the levelling of the classes that occurs with other consonants. In spoken MH, verbs with final-*h* display a shift similar to that described above for the future inflection, e.g., /tikne/, /tikni/ (*qny*) :: /titma/, /titmi/ (< *tmh*) ‘you (MS) will be awed’, ‘you (FS) will be awed’. In some

¹² Another example where the shift is driven by morphological analogy is the form /nihleta/ ‘she led’ as against the standard נִהְלָה *nihala* (Schwarzwald 2016, 269).

¹³ The form */likʔot/ in the meaning ‘to read’ is unattested; however, the opposite phenomenon of shifting of the final-y verb to final-ʾ occurs with the verb *liqrot* ‘to happen’, rendered in spoken MH as /likʔo/. See Schwarzwald (1984, 24) for further examples of shifts within this class in MH.

more progressive NENA dialects, such as J. Urmi, the class of final-y includes former final-ʿ, *h*, and **ḡ* verbs in all stems, e.g., /paqe/ ‘(that) he bursts’ < **pqʿ*, /dabe/ ‘(that) he sacrifices’ < **dbh*, and /pale/ ‘(that) he divides’ < **plḡ*.

The phenomenon of mergers in the two verbal classes is clearly not a novelty, being widely attested in earlier stages of these languages (e.g., Qumran Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, Classical Syriac). It is nonetheless worth raising the possibility that the tendency is a cyclical one, or more characteristic of spoken variants, from which ʾ is easily dropped. It is also worth observing that phonetic and morphological strategies both contribute to this process.

It may be concluded that we observe not only merger of the final-ʾ and final-y classes, but also more advanced levelling of the paradigms across the verbal classes. The shift to the final-y class is complete in some NENA dialects, whereas in spoken MH it pertains only to a part of the paradigm and is, moreover, lexically conditioned. It is evident that MH is less progressive in this feature; however, in some respects the NENA dialects also gravitate towards a conservative profile. Namely, including /y/ as a radical consonant in the paradigm (25b), (27b) reveals a tendency towards more canonical overt triradicality, which may be considered typologically conservative.

3.2. Glides in Medial Position

Another area of mergers and paradigm overlap in the two languages is observed in the so-called hollow verbs, i.e., those with a middle glide. In MH, both middle-y and historical middle-**w*

classes display a strong tendency towards regularisation according to the strong verb. Although in NENA the verbs with the middle-*y* and middle-*w* clearly belong to separate classes, a tendency towards levelling the paradigm by analogy to the strong verb can be identified in some forms. Compare the spoken MH *hif'il* and the NENA Stem III forms, both historically derived from C-stem:

Table 9: Semivowels in medial position in NENA and MH

Verbal class	Spoken MH		J. Sanandaj	J. Urmi
Hollow	<i>byn</i>	<i>dwɤ</i>	<i>ɣlp~ lyp</i>	<i>zyz</i>
	(28) /ma- vin/ מבין 'he under- stands'	(29) /madi- yax/ מדיח 'he washes the dishes'	(30) /māləp/ '(that) he teaches'	(31) /mazəd/ '(that) he adds'
Strong	(32) /madlik/ lights up (TR)'	מדליק 'he (TR)'	(33) /patəx/ '(that) he opens' G- stem versus /madməx/ '(that) he puts to sleep' C-stem	

In MH, the C-stem pattern vowel is that of the strong verb, i.e., /a/, which is introduced into the inflection instead of standard /e/, i.e., normative *mevin* versus /mavin/, normative *mediyax/mediyah* versus /madiyax/.¹⁴ Also in NENA, the middle glide is elided and the vowel quality lowers from the contraction **mazyəd* to /ə/ in /mazəd/, rather than /i/. As a result, in the present, the C-stem verb has the vocalism of the G-stem strong verb, rather than of a C-stem strong verb with three radicals, cf. /patəx/ :: /mazəd/. Bolozky (1999, 187–89; 2002, 247) reports this merger in MH; however, he claims that it is less common than the reverse shift. Namely, initial-*n* verbs tend to inflect like middle-*y* ones, whereby

¹⁴ See also Schwarzwald (1984, 21–23) on the other areas of analogical change within this class in MH.

the thematic vowel is /e/ of the hollow verbs instead of /a/ of their strong and initial-*n* counterparts, e.g., standard *mapil* (< *npl*) ‘he trips (sbd)’ shifts to /mepil/ in spoken MH, or standard *makir* (< *nkr*) ‘he knows (sbd)’ shifts to /mekiʁ ~ mikiʁ/ (OM). I wish to add that, in fact, spoken MH verbs from both hollow and initial-*n* classes, as well as the strong verbs in the present, appear with a reduced first vowel, e.g., /məvin ~ m^əvin/ ‘he understands’ (< *byn*) (P931_1), /məgiyim/ ‘they arrive’ (*ng*) (P_423_1), /mətsiya/ ‘she suggests’ (*sy*) (Y32), which could be interpreted as a negotiated vowel common to both classes. This phenomenon would be a typological advancement towards a unified paradigm of the weak verbs in the present, bypassing the unintuitive (from the MH speaker’s viewpoint) distinction between initial-*n* and middle-*y/w* classes. In NENA, on the other hand, only the verb *lyp* ~ *ylyp* ‘learn’ regularly displays the shift, e.g., /patxa/, /patxi/ ‘(that) she opens’, ‘(that) they open’ :: /malpa/, /malpi/ ‘(that) she teaches’, ‘(that) they teach’; however, it is most likely derived from the original root *ylyp*, as evidenced by the form /moləp/ in Qaraqosh, displaying elision of the initial-*y*, rather than the contraction of the glide in the middle position. In most dialects, the original verbal class is visible in the rest of the paradigm, where the vowel quality harks back to the glide /y/, rather than /ə/ of the strong verb, e.g., /mazda ~ mazida/ ‘(that) she adds’ in J. Urmi. A few dialects, such as Bne-Lagippa, display a merger in the rest of the paradigm, e.g., /mazda/ ‘(that) she adds’. Furthermore, the merger in spoken MH encompasses the past and future inflection, unlike the NENA shift, which allows us to conclude that the merger of verbal classes

in the C-stem is overall a less advanced phenomenon in NENA than in MH.

The mergers within the hollow verb class are, again, not unprecedented in either Hebrew or Aramaic. However, the initial syllable /*me*/ > /*mə*/ of spoken MH may be connected with another modern phenomenon of reduction and neutralisation, operative across verbal stems.

3.3. Mergers of Stems

Earlier Hebrew and Aramaic featured the performative *m*- in the participle in most derived stems. In some NENA dialects, this consonant was dropped in the D-stem unless followed by a vowel, resulting in identical patterns for the G- and D-stem. This shift is probably phonologically motivated and triggered by a bilabial initial radical, forming a double bilabial cluster with the prefix *m*- (Borghero 2008, 77–78). The cluster would be simplified to leave the radical only, e.g., **mbašəl* > /*bašəl*/ ‘(that) he cooks’. This elision of the initial *m*- was next extended to all verbs in the D-stem. Thus, the present form /*bašəl*/ in C. Diyana has the vocalism of the G-stem form /*patəx*/ ‘(that) he opens’ (35b). A similar phenomenon may be observed in spoken MH, where the vowel following the initial /*m*/ in the derived stems is reduced to /*ə*/, as in the *hifʿil* (C-stem) above, e.g., /*məvin*/, /*mətsiya*/, but also in *piʿel* (D-stem), e.g., *mešayen* > /*mətsayen*/ ‘he indicates’ and *puʿal* (D-stem passive), e.g., *mešuyan* > /*mətsuyan*/

‘excellent’.¹⁵ The reduction of the first vowel triggers the realisation of the prefixal *m-* as an inaudible release or its total elision before the labiodental /f/, i.e., in a similar environment to the NENA bilabial cluster above. The weakening or dropping of *m-* leads to a parallel vocalism of the *paʿal* (G-stem), *piʿel* (D-stem) and *puʿal* (D-stem passive) participles (36)–(38). Participles are morphological substantives in MH, whereas in NENA they are show genuine verbal inflection. Nevertheless, the levelling of different stems is observable in both languages:

Table 10: Merger of stems in NENA and MH

Stem	C. Qaraqosh	C. Diyana
D-stem	(34a) /mbaʃəl/	(34b) /baʃəl/
‘(that) he cooks’ D-stem > G-stem		
G-stem	(35a) /paʔəx/	(35b) /paʔəx/
‘(that) he opens’		
Stem	MH written/standard	MH spoken
<i>puʿal</i>	(36a) <i>məʃuyan</i>	(36b) /mʔtsuyan ~ mʔtsuyan/
מצוין ‘excellent’		
<i>piʿel</i>	(37a) <i>məʔager</i>	(37b) /ʔager/ ¹⁶
מפגר ‘retard(ed), slow (of a clock)’ <i>piʿel</i> > <i>paʿal</i>		
<i>paʿal</i>	(38) <i>zaqen</i> זקן /zaken/	‘old’

The changes in the morphophonological domain in the two languages clearly reveal a tendency to level patterns in the derived

¹⁵ The elision of the unaccented /e/ is also common in other forms and often includes the prefix vowel before the stem, see Bolozky and Schwarzwald (1990, 34); Bolozky (2002, 243).

¹⁶ Since the elision renders the first radical as a spirant, unusual in this position within the native lexicon, some speakers construe this form as a loan from Arabic, which evidences the total loss of the initial syllable.

stems. The possibility of vowel shifts operating across verbal stems in MH was also suggested by Bolozky (2002, 188), which allows us to conclude that spoken MH gravitates towards a reduction in the number of inflectional paradigms. In some more progressive NENA dialects, the process is complete, e.g., J. Urmi, C. Hassana, or J. Sulemaniyya feature only two verbal stems, where the descendants of the D-stem shifted to either G- or C-stem.

The examples of shifts and mergers provided above allow us to draw some tentative conclusions regarding the typological status of the spoken verbal renditions of MH and NENA. Since in MH there exists a written standard that strongly influences the linguistic culture of the majority of speakers (Izre'el 2001–2002, 106), spoken MH appears less progressive than NENA in terms of the neutralisation of inflectional paradigms and the number of stems. In addition, the time span for the development of the modern stages of the two languages is different, as in the case of MH we may speak of a phenomenon that began only in the nineteenth century (see above). However, I wish to claim that the mergers of verbal classes among weak verbs and pattern vowel reduction and/or elision parallel the development in progressive NENA dialects. In this light, the spoken renditions of MH verbs, which would be viewed as 'incorrect' or 'substandard' within a prescriptive framework, may in fact be regarded as typologically more advanced, indicating possible directions for further development. As for NENA, it is worth noting that despite extensive contact with other languages beyond the Semitic family (Hopkins 2005,

43), the morphophonological and morphological tendencies continue those of earlier stages of Aramaic and display developments similar to those found in another spoken Semitic language, i.e., MH.

4.0. Summary

I have argued above that contrasting NENA dialects and MH reveals some noteworthy parallels. The diversity characteristic of each speech community results in a variety of linguistic forms, which can be arranged as a cline progressing from the more original and standard to the more advanced and innovative. Thanks to this, the gradual development of the linguistic features may be observed. The comparison contributes to our understanding of the diachronic development of the forms and their spoken renditions, especially with regard to MH, as an avantgarde of linguistic change.

Analysis of the verbal forms in the two languages also indicates some similar tendencies. These occur within the final-y and final-ʾ classes, as well as in hollow verbs. Moreover, both languages exhibit a tendency to level the number of stems and to reduce the number of inflectional paradigms. These tendencies are triggered by related phenomena on the level of phonology, resulting in employing similar strategies of verb formation. In this sense, the corresponding developments in NENA and spoken MH may be indicative of typological evolution patterns common to the modern spoken Semitic languages.

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Glossing

- **ʔazəl* go:PRS.3MS '(that) he goes'
ʔasaf, [asaf] gather:PST.3MS 'he gathered'
 **ʔaxəl*, [ʔaxəl] eat:PRS.3MS '(that) he eats'
 **ʔəqle*, [rəqqe] *ʔəq-le* ran:PST-3MS 'he ran'
 [bašəl] cook:PRS.3MS '(that) he cooks'
 [b-ʔəxəl ~ ʔəxəl] FUT-eat:PRS.3MS 'he will eat'
 **ba'e*, [bəye], [ʔaye ~ ʔae] want:PRS.3MS '(that) he wants'
 [dabe] *dab-e* sacrifice:PRS-3MS '(that) he sacrifices'
 [däe] hit:PRS.3MS '(that) he hits'
dawəq hold.PRS.3MS '(that) he holds'
doqa doq-a hold.PRS-3FS '(that) she holds'
 'e'eše, 'e'eše, [ʔease], [ʔaʔase], [ə:sə] 'e-eše 1CS-do:FUT 'I will do'
g-ezel, *k-zalə*, 'i-azəl, y-azəl IND-go:PRS.3MS 'he goes'
hehelit/hexelit, [ʔexlit] decide:PST.3MS 'he decided'
ko'ev, [koev] hurt:PRS.MS 'it hurts'
 [koʁa] *koʁ-a* read:PRS-3FS 'she reads'
 [koʁe] *koʁ-e* read:PRS-3MS 'he reads'
kxəl *k-xəl* IND-eat:PRS.3MS 'he eats'
ləhithabe' ləhitxabe', [le'itxabot] hide:INF 'to hide oneself'
liqnot, [liknot] buy:INF 'to buy'
 [mə'ni 'ase?] *ma-'ni 'a-še* what:Q-1CS 1CS-do:FUT 'what shall I do?'
madiyax wash_dishes:PRS.MS 'he washes the dishes'
madlik light:PRS.MS 'he lights up (TR)'
madmæx put_to_sleep:PRS.MS '(that) he puts to sleep'
makir, [mekiʁ ~ mikiʁ] know:PRS.MS 'he knows (somebody)'
mäləp, [moləp] teach:PRS.3MS '(that) he teaches'
 [malpa] *malp-a* teach:PRS-3FS '(that) she teaches'

- [malpi] *malp-i* teach:PRS-3PL ‘(that) they teach’
mazəd add:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he adds’
 [mazida] *mazid-a*, [mazda] *mazd-a* add:PRS-3FS ‘(that) she adds’
 [mbašəl] cook:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he cooks’
məfager, [fageɤ] be_retarded:PRS.MS ‘retard(ed)’
 [məgiyim] *məgiy-im* arrive:PRS-MPL ‘they arrive’
 [mepil] trip:PRS.MS ‘he trips (TR)’
mešayen, [mətsayen] indicate:PRS.MS ‘he indicates’
 [mətsiya] *məši-y-a* suggest:PRS-FS ‘she suggests’
mešuyan, [məšuyan] be_distinguished:PRS.MS ‘excellent’
mevin, [mavin], [məvin], [mʰvin] understand:PRS.MS ‘he understands’
naʿuf, *naʿuf*, *nauf na-ʿuf* 1CPL-fly:FUT ‘we will fly’
nelex, [nelex], [nilex] *ne-lex* 1CPL-go:FUT ‘we will go’
nihala, *nihleta nihl-a* lead:PST-3FS ‘she led’
pale pal-e divide:PRS-3MS ‘(that) he divides’
 [paqe] *paq-e* burst:PRS-3MS ‘(that) he bursts’
patəx, [paṭəx] open:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he opens’
 [patxa] *patx-a* open:PRS-3FS ‘(that) she opens’
 [patxi] *patx-i* open:PRS-3PL ‘(that) they open’
 **qaʿəm*, [qem] stand:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he stands’
 **qarʾa*, *qarya*, *qarʾ-a qar-ya* read:PRS-3FS ‘(that) she reads’
 **qareʾ* read:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he reads’
 **qraʾa*, [qraya] read:INF ‘to read’
qare qar-e read:PRS-3MS ‘(that) he reads’
qona, [kona] *qon-a* buy:PRS-3FS ‘she buys’
qone, [kone] *qon-e* buy:PRS-3MS ‘he buys’

qore’ read:PRS.3MS ‘he reads’

qore’*t qore*’-*t* read:PRS-3FS ‘she reads’

ro’*e*, [ʁoe] see:PRS.MS ‘he sees’

**ša*’*əš*, *šayəš*, [šəš] rock:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he rocks’

šmə’*le*, *šme*’*le*, *šmə*’*lə*, *šmilə*, *šmile*, *šmele* *šmə*’-*le* hear:PST-3MS ‘he heard’

šɔyməx, *šeməx* *šɔym*-*əx* *šem*-*əx* fast:PRS-1CPL ‘(that) we fast’

ta’*asfi*, *ta*’*asfi*, [teesfi], *ta*’-*asfi*-*i* 2-gather:FUT-FS ‘you will gather’

ta’*aše* *hešbòn*’ *ta*’-*aše* *hešbon* 2MS-do:FUT account ‘do the counting’

ta’*aše*, [ta’ase] *ta*’-*aše* 2MS-do:FUT ‘you will do’

ta’*azor*, *ta*’*azor*, [taʔazox], *ta*’-*azor* 2MS-help:FUT ‘you will help’

[tikʁa] *ti-kʁa* 2MS/3FS-read:FUT ‘you/she will read’

[tikʁi] *ti-kʁ-i* 2-read:FUT-FS ‘you will read’

tiqne, [tikne] *ti-qne* 2MS-buy:FUT ‘you will buy’

tiqni, [tikni] *ti-qn-i* 2-buy:FUT-FS ‘you will buy’

titma *ti-tma* 2MS-be_awed:FUT ‘you will be awed’

titmi *ti-tm-i* 2-be_awed:FUT-FS ‘you will be awed’

to’*e*, [toe] err:PRS.MS ‘he errs’

to’*em*, [toem] taste:PRS.MS ‘he tastes’

ve’-*e*’*evor*, *ve*’-*e*’*evor*, [vevox], *ve*’-*e*’-*evor* and-1CS-go_over:FUT ‘and I will go over’

**xaze*, [xaze] see:PRS.3MS ‘(that) he sees’

**xazya*, [xazya] *xaz-ya* see:PRS-3FS ‘(that) she sees’

**xzaya*, [xzaya] see:INF ‘to see’

ya’*azru*, [yazʁu] *ya*’-*azr-u* 3-help:FUT-PL ‘they will help’

yozu, *kiz*, *kal* go:IND.PRS.3MS ‘he goes’

zaqen, [zaken] ADJ.MS ‘old’

THE NORTH-EASTERN NEO-ARAMAIC DIALECT OF TIN*

Eleanor Coghill

The village of Tin (Neo-Aramaic *tən* or *təna*, Arabic *tīnā*) is situated in Northern Iraq, in the Şapna valley, around 30 km west of Amadiya. Its exact location is 37°05'52.8"N 43°14'45.6"E (43.246, 37.098). The speakers of this dialect (*tənnāye*) belong to the Chaldean Catholic church. Some information about Tin can be gleaned from online reports: one, by Majed Eshoo (2004), reports that in the 1957 census it had 362 inhabitants. At some later point it was destroyed, but was eventually reinhabited, initially in tents. According to the website of the Chaldean Patriarchate,

* I would like to express my deep gratitude to the *Tənnāyə* in Michigan who answered my questions most kindly and patiently, namely Edward, Miko, Malko, and Salam. I am also grateful to the AHRC, for funding the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Database project, and, of course, to Geoffrey Khan, who led this project, enabling the collection of priceless data on these fascinating dialects. Abbreviations: C. Syriac = Classical Syriac; I. Arabic = Iraqi Arabic; N. Kurdish = Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji and Bahdini); I, II, III = NENA derivational stems cognate with Aramaic *pe'al*, *pa'el*, *'afel*, respectively; Q = quadriradical; i, ii, iii, etc. = Arabic derivation stems; | = end of intonational phrase.

it had fifteen Chaldean families in 2010 and twenty families at the time of writing (2017)—fifty people.¹

Out of the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialects so far documented, Tin seems to be most similar to the Christian dialect of Aradhin, a village around 10km to the east. This description, therefore, relates the findings for Tin to the data for Aradhin from Krotkoff (1982) and Borghero (2009).

This study of the dialect of Tin was carried out as part of the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Project at Cambridge University, led by Prof. Geoffrey Khan and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. The data here is based on interviews undertaken in 2004 with four *tənnāye* living in the Detroit area. Most of the phonology and morphology is based on elicitation sessions with a young man (Informant A), but further information was obtained from texts recorded from his mother (Informant B) and two other older men (C and D). Both of Informant A's parents are also from Tin, although one of his father's parents came from Aradhin.

This paper focuses on the basic phonology, morphology, and lexicon of the dialect, excluding syntax, for reasons of space.

¹ See <https://saint-adday.com/?p=18636>. I thank Dr Nicholas Al-Jeloo for bringing these sources to my attention.

1.0. Phonology

1.1. Phonemic Inventories

1.1.1. Consonants

The inventory of consonant phonemes in the dialect of Tin is given in Table 1. Where both voiced and voiceless consonants exist, the voiceless is given first. Consonants in the last four categories (nasal–approximant) are all voiced. Consonants marked with an asterisk are uncommon (see §1.4.3 for details).

Table 1: Consonantal inventory

	Bilabial	Labiodent.	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alv.	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Laryngeal
Stop/affricate										
plain	p	f	t		č		k	q		ʔ
	b	v*	d		j		g			
emphatic			ṭ		č*					
			d*							
Fricative										
plain			θ	s	š			x	ħ	h
			ð	z				ġ*		
emphatic				ṣ						
			ð							
Nasal										
plain	m			n						
Lateral										
plain				l						
emphatic				l*						
Tap/trill										
plain				r						
emphatic				ɾ						
Approximant										
	w					y			ʕ	

Note the IPA values for the following symbols: *č* [tʃ], *j* [dʒ], *š* [ʃ] *y* [j], *x* [χ] *ğ* [ɣ], *h* [ħ], *‘* [ʕ], *’* [ʔ]. Apart from *h*, consonants with a dot below are the emphatic (velarised/pharyngealised) versions of the undotted consonant; thus the symbol *ḫ* represents [ħʕ]. Other letters have their IPA values.

Some phonemes are found only in loanwords, but are nevertheless common, such as /f/. By contrast, /v/ is attested only in a couple of Kurdish loanwords.

1.1.2. Vowels

Tin’s vowel phonemes are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Vowel inventory

Long vowels	<i>ā</i>	<i>ε</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ū</i>
Short vowels	<i>a</i>	<i>ə</i>	<i>u</i>			

The short vowels are always short, except in final syllables, where they may be lengthened at the ends of intonational phrases. Long vowels may be mid-long or short in unstressed positions.

Long and short vowels occur for the most part in complementary distribution: for instance, short vowels are not usually found in stressed open syllables, but there are some exceptions, e.g., *ṭara* ‘door’, *maṛa* ‘spade’, and *gəra* ‘hill’.

The approximate phonetic realisation of the vowels in the environment of non-emphatic (non-velarised/pharyngealised) consonants is shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Phonetic realisation of vowels

Phoneme	Phonetic realisation
ā	[æ:]–[ɐ:]
ε	[ɛ:]
e	[e:]
i	[i:]
o	[o:]
ū	[u:]
a	[æ]–[ɐ]–[ʌ]
ə	[ɪ]–[ə]
u	[u]

In emphatic environments, the vowels may be backed and slightly rounded.

1.2. Stress in Words, Phrases, and Sentences

The default position of the word stress in words of more than one syllable is penultimate, as is usual in Christian NENA dialects. Verbs, however, show other stress positions. Imperatives always take initial stress, however many syllables they have, e.g., *má-lpuniłəhən* ‘Teach (PL) them!’ The 2PL S-suffix *-ūtun* is unstressed, leading to antepenultimate stress, e.g., *p-yátwūtun* ‘you (PL) will sit’. Derivational stem II verbs, as well as quadriradical verbs, stress the first syllable of the present stem, e.g., *i-mápəłxi* ‘they use’, *i-mšáxəłpa* ‘she changes’. This suggests that the ə vowel is still an epenthetic vowel in this form (the underlying form is *mapłxi*), unlike in some dialects, where the ə can take full stress, e.g., Alqosh *k-mapəłxi* ‘they use’.

As in many other dialects, word stress is marginally phonemic: *mbašəlla* ‘he will cook it (F)’ versus *mbášəlla* ‘cook (SG) it (F)’ Penultimate stress, as the default, is unmarked in this paper.

Words and morphemes are often combined in phrases containing a single stress: one element may be a clitic, but this is not necessarily the case. The long equals sign '=' is used where the stress is on the second component, e.g., *baxtət = tətte* 'the second woman', with stress on *tətte*. The short equals sign '=' is used where the stress is on the first component, e.g., *māṭux* in *māṭux-iwat?* 'How are you (F)?' Sometimes in such stress groups the stress on the first component is moved to the last syllable, in which case it is marked, e.g., *ṭlāθá-'amma* 'three hundred'.

For affixes a simple hyphen is used. The distinction between affixes and clitics is, however, somewhat blurred. For instance, the monoconsonantal prepositions (*b-*, *l-* and *m-*), as well as the linker *d =* are somewhere in between.

Nuclear stress within an intonational phrase is indicated with the grave accent (`). The end of an intonation phrase is indicated with |.

1.3. Synchronic Sound Rules

Assimilation of consonants, as in other NENA dialects, involves voicing, nasality, place of articulation, and emphatic spread.

Assimilation is common with grammatical prefixes:

p-səṭwa (*b-* + *səṭwa*) 'in the winter'

m-madrassa (*b-* + *madrassa*) 'at school'

š = šaqłən (*d =* + *šaqłən*) 'that I (m.) may take'

nāšəṭ = ṭūra (*nāšəṭ* + *ṭūra*) 'the mountain people'

An emphatic consonant normally makes a neighbouring consonant emphatic. Emphatic spread may also affect consonants not immediately adjacent:

tūra ‘mountain’ (< *tūra*)

ṣiṭa ‘hand-span’ (< *ṣiṭa*, cf. C. Syriac *ṣiṭā* ‘palm, span’)

As is common across NENA, there is a tendency for a voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ to become a stop, when adjacent to an /l/:

mætle ‘he died’ (*myθ* I)

nxætla ‘it (F) came down’ (*nxθ* I)

The sequence **tl* further assimilates to /tt/ (unlike in Aradhin), though not if the /t/ is part of a verbal root, as in the examples above.

’atte ‘he has’ < **’ætle* < *’iθ-le* (Aradhin *’ætle*)²

The sequence **rl* assimilates to /rr/, with no reduction of the gemination, just as in Aradhin (Krotkoff 1982: 27):

wærre ‘he entered’ < **wærl*

Some long vowels are reduced when an open syllable is closed through the addition of a suffix: /ū/ and /o/ shift to /u/, while /ā/ shifts to /a/ and /i/ to /ə/:

koma M, *kumta* F ‘black’

yarūqa M, *yaruqta* F ‘green’

xwāra M, *xwarta* F ‘white’

šqila M, *šqalta* F ‘taken’

Vowel harmony is attested, where /ā/ or /a/ shifts to /ε/ preceding /hε/. Thus *maha?* ‘what?’ with enclitic copula becomes *méhε-le* (< *mahεle* < *maha-ile*) ‘What is it?’ The same process has

² Krotkoff (1982, 38) gives forms with /tl/, while Borghero (2009) gives them with the highly unusual /θl/.

resulted in the form *ʿanḩē* ‘those’ < **ʿanāḩē* < **ʿanāḩa*. The /ε/ in the final syllable comes either from the form with the enclitic copula (as with *maha*) or by analogy with the near deixis demonstrative *ʿanne* ‘these’. A similar form, *ʿanēʿḩē*, is found in Aradhin (Krotkoff 1982, 20; Borghero 2009).

1.4. Historical Developments³

1.4.1. *Begadkefat* and Other Consonant Changes

In NENA, the plosive and fricative allophones of Late Aramaic **b*, **g*, **d*, **k* and **t* for the most part become separate phonemes (/b/, /w/; /g/, /ʕ/; /d/, /ð/; /k/, /x/; /t/, /θ/), while for **p*, the fricative allophone merged with the plosive (/p/).

While in some dialects the interdental fricatives underwent later shifts and mergers, Tin, like Aradhin, has preserved them:

bεθa ‘house’ < **bayṭa*

ʿiḩa ‘hand’ < **iḩa* < **yḩa*

Tin is a *x*-dialect, that is the universal NENA merger of **k* and **ḩ* has resulted in /x/ [χ], rather than /ḩ/ [ħ].

In NENA original **ʿ* shifted to *ʿ*, merging with the reflex of **ḡ*, as well as historical **ʿ*. In Tin /ʕ/ then disappeared in all positions except initial:

ʿaqla ‘leg, foot’ < **ʿaqla*

ʿaqərwa ‘scorpion’ < **ʿaqərḩa*

ʿara ‘land’ < **ʿarʿa* < **arʿa*

³ Forms marked with *** are as reconstructed for a direct ancestor, rather than C. Syriac. Some are still attested in other NENA dialects.

dewe ‘wolves’ < **dəʿwe* (cf. Alqosh *dəʿwe*) < **dəʿhē*

pāle ‘workers’ < **paʿle* < **paʿlē*

šawwa ‘seven’ < **šawʿa* < **šəḥʿa*

təšša ‘nine’ < **təšʿa* < **təšʿa*

In verbs with /ʾ/ as a radical, it is elided in some positions and shifted to /y/ in others:

šama ‘she may hear’ < **šamʿa* < **šamʿa*

šamyāli ‘I heard her’ < **šmiʿāli* (by analogy with III-y verbs like *xəzyāli* ‘I saw her’)

The glottal stop is found in non-initial position in a few words where it is not original, e.g., *xāʿa* ‘one’ (M). Its phonemic status in word-initial position becomes clear when prepositions are prefixed and it is not elided, e.g., *l-ʿeta* ‘to church’, *b-ʿaqlāθa* ‘on the feet’, *l-ʿaləl* ‘upwards’.⁴ The glottal stop beginning deictic words, however, is regularly absent following prefixes, e.g., *laxxa* (*l-* + *ʿaxxa*) ‘hither, here’, *dawwa* (*d-* + *ʿawwa*) ‘of this’. The same occurs in words where an initial glottal stop is not original, but epenthetic, e.g., *b-iḏi* (*b-* + *ʿiḏi*, < **b-yḏi*) ‘on my hand’.

Apparent exceptions to the sound shifts described above, where the original sounds are preserved (such as *ḥ*, *ʿ*, and *ḡ*), are borrowings from Classical Syriac, or retentions conditioned by neighbouring emphatics or /q/ (see §1.4.3).

⁴ In some NENA dialects, such as Jewish Urmi (Khan 2008a, 43), the glottal stop has no clear phonemic status, even in initial position, as illustrated by *b-arba* (< **b-ʿarba*) ‘by/for four’ (Khan 2008a, 239, 304).

1.4.2. Vowel Changes

The vowel phonology of Tin is relatively conservative, with the exception of the diphthongs, **ay* and **aw*, which have been monophthongised to /*ɛ*/ and /*o*/, respectively:

bεθa ‘house’ < **bayta*

tora ‘ox’ < **tawra*

Medial and final **ō* are preserved, rather than being raised to *ū/u* respectively:

brona ‘boy’ < **brōna*

smoqa ‘red’ < **smōqa*

kālo ‘bride’ (cf. Alqosh *kālu*)

rādyo ‘radio’

Medial **ē* is preserved, rather than being raised to *i*:

xzeli ‘I saw’ < **hzē-lī*

beta ‘egg’ < **bētā* < **bē’ta* < **bē’ta*

Final **ē* is also preserved as /*e*/, as in Aradhin, rather than being centralised to /*ə*/ [ɪ~ə], as in some dialects:

bnone ‘boys, sons’ (cf. Alqosh *bnonə*)

pθəxle ‘he opened’ < **pṯiḥ-lē*

xāze ‘he may see’ < **ḥāzē*

1.4.3. Innovated Phonemes and Rare Retentions⁵

Most phonemes not reconstructed as inherited from earlier NENA have been adopted via loanwords from Northern Kurdish

⁵ The source words for the Northern Kurdish and Iraqi Arabic loanwords are taken from Chyet (2003) and Woodhead et al. (1967) respectively.

(Kurmanji/Bahdini), Iraqi Arabic, or Classical Syriac. Conditioned retention of pre-NENA realisations, as well as other internal processes, has also played a role.

/ʕ/: e.g., *ʾišu* ‘Jesus’ (C. Syriac *išo*), *ʾmḏ* III ‘baptise’ (C. Syriac *ʾmd ʾafel*), *sʿd* II ‘help’ (Arabic *sʿd* iii). A rare example of /ʕ/ in inherited lexicon is *tʿl* II ‘play’. The etymology of this is uncertain: Krotkoff (1985, 129–30) suggests it derives from *tʿl paʿel* (C. Syriac ‘fawn, wag the tail’), and is cognate with Aramaic *taʿlā* ‘fox’, in which case the /ʕ/ would be a retention. Mutzafi (2006), on the other hand, argues for an etymology from the root **tll* (attested in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Mandaic with the meaning ‘play’), via the following stages: **tyl* > **tʿl* > **tʿl*. A clearer example of retention is *ʿwa* ‘cloud’ (cf. C. Syriac *ʿayḥā* ‘cloudiness’), perhaps under the influence of the neighbouring labial (Khan 2002, 42).

/č/: e.g., *ču* ‘no’ (N. Kurdish *çu* ‘no’), *kačala* ‘bald’ (N. Kurdish *k’eçel* ‘bald’). This phoneme has also arisen in inherited lexemes as a result of the combination of *t* and *š*, e.g., *čáʾassar* ~ *čassar* < **atša-ʾassar* ‘nineteen’ and *čeri* < **təšri* ‘autumn’.

/č̣/: this phoneme is found in *čmy* III ‘put out, extinguish’, *čoʾāna* ~ *čuʾāna* ‘smooth’, and *čwčy* ~ *čxčg* Q ‘chirp, tweet’. According to Mutzafi (2005, 92–94), the first comes from the Aramaic root *sm̐y* (cf. C. Syriac *sm̐y peʿal* ‘be blind’), via **šm̐y*, as a result of sporadic pharyngealisation of the /m/. The second originates in the Aramaic root *šʿ* (Mutzafi 2004, 32), while the third is onomatopoeic.

/ḍ/: this phoneme is rare, attested in only two words. The first, *zdl* I ‘be afraid’, is cognate with *zd* I in some other dialects,

such as Alqosh, perhaps with the /l/ arising via reanalysis of L-suffixes.⁶ Mutzafi (2004, 77) links this root to C. Syriac *ettʿzi* (zwʿ *ʿettafʿal*). The emphasis in *zdl* I may be due to influence from the historical pharyngeal. The second word is *maḍore* (ḍʾr III) ‘return (TR)’, which derives from the root *ḍʾr. The emphasis here is also probably due to the historical pharyngeal. In derivational stem I, however, it has an unemphatic *d*: *dʾr* I ‘return (INTR)’, although the /r/ is emphatic in some forms: *i-dāyər* ‘he returns’, but *dərri* ‘I returned’. The nasal bilabial in *maḍore* may have played a supporting role: the sounds /m/, /b/, /l/, and /r/ have been shown to be susceptible to spontaneous emphaticisation and subsequent emphasis spread, as well to have a role conditioning the preservation of pharyngeals (Mutzafi 2008, 20–21; Khan 2008b, 28).

/ð/: e.g., *hḍr* II ‘prepare’ (I. Arabic *hḍr* ii ‘prepare’).

/l/: e.g., *beḷāye* < **be-ḷāye* ‘upstairs room’. Cf. Aradhin *beḷāye* (Krotkoff 1982, 120) and Barwar *be-ḷāye* (Khan 2008b, 1047) with the same meaning. The emphasis is due to the historical pharyngeal.

/f/: e.g., *flānāya* ‘so-and-so’ (I. Arabic *flān*), *fyr* I ‘fly’ (N. Kurdish *firîn* ‘fly’), *kyf* II ‘enjoy oneself’ (I. Arabic *kyf* II ‘enjoy oneself’).

/ğ/: This sound mainly occurs as an allophone of /x/ before voiced consonants, e.g., *bax-bābi* = *ba[ɣ]bābi* ‘my stepmother’. It

⁶ Such a reanalysis is not altogether expected, as there are no forms with *zdʾ* I where there is a geminated /ll/ where one /l/ might be reanalysed as part of the root. The /l/ is unlikely to have come from the preposition *l-*, either, as the verb tends to occur with *m-* ~ *mən* ‘from’, not *l-*, before the source of the fear.

is, however, occasionally attested as a phoneme in loanwords, e.g., *pağra* ‘body’ (C. Syriac *pağrā* ‘body’), *qpğ* II ~ *qpx* II ‘put a lid on’ (< Turkic). It is also found in one variant of the onomatopoeic verb *čxčğ* ~ *čwčy* Q ‘tweet’.

/ħ/: e.g., *ħky* III ‘speak’ (Arabic *ħky* iv ‘speak’). It is also preserved in some inherited lexemes, under the influence of a neighbouring emphatic or /q/, e.g., *rahqa* ‘far’, *ħaziqa* ‘hardworking’, as in other NENA dialects (Mutzafi 2004, 28–33). It is innovated too in *ħal* ‘up to, until’ (compare Aradhin *hal*).

/j/: e.g., *sjl* II ‘record’ (Arabic *sjl* ii ‘record’), *panjara* ‘window’ (N. Kurdish *p’encere* ‘window’).

/ɾ/: e.g., *baɾāye* (the *b* is also realised as an emphatic) and *baθɾa* ‘after’. This consonant’s phonemic status is marginal at best. Nevertheless, as it is not entirely predictable, it is included here.

/v/: e.g., *laxāva* ‘bridle’ (N. Kurdish *lixav* ‘rein, bridle’), *pelāve* ‘shoes’ (N. Kurdish *p’êlav* ‘shoe’).

2.0. Morphology

2.1. Pronouns

The independent personal pronouns are given in Table 4:

Table 4: Independent personal pronouns

3	MSG	<i>’āwa</i>	‘he’
	FSG	<i>’āya</i>	‘she’
	PL	<i>’āni</i>	‘they’
2	SG	<i>’āti</i>	‘you’
	PL	<i>’axtūtun</i>	‘you’
1	SG	<i>’āna</i>	‘I’
	PL	<i>’axni</i>	‘we’

Tin is one of the dialects that lacks gender distinction in second person pronouns (unlike Aradhin). The 2nd person plural pronoun is notable for its infixed *-ūt-*; compare the more conservative Aradhin *ʼaxtu(n)*. The Tin ending *-ūtun* is by analogy with the S-suffixes, which index subjects on Present Base verbs (§2.6.2).

The demonstrative pronouns attested (Table 5) fall into four categories of deixis: near, far, very far (indicated by iconic lengthening of the stressed syllable), and absent/anaphoric. The first three are true deictics, in that they are used for referents that can be pointed towards, while the last is used for referents that are elsewhere or in the past and is identical to the personal pronouns.

Table 5: Independent demonstrative pronouns

	Near	Far	Very far	Absent
MSG	ʼawwa	ʼawaʼha	ʼawā(ā)ʼha	ʼāwa
FSG	ʼayya	ʼayaʼha	ʼayā(ā)ʼha	ʼāya
PL	ʼanne	ʼanehe	ʼane(ε)ʼhe	ʼāni

The demonstratives can be used both independently and attributively, e.g., *ʼanne=bnāθa* ‘these girls’, *ʼāwa=gora* ‘that man’, but some have shorter forms when used attributively (Table 6):

Table 6: Attributive demonstrative pronouns

	Near	Far	Very far	Absent
MSG	ʼawwa=	ʼawā́=	—	ʼāwa=~ʼaw=
FSG	ʼayya=	ʼayā́=	—	ʼāya=~ʼε=
PL	ʼanne=	ʼanḗ=	—	ʼāni=~ʼan=

The initial /ʼa/ of the far deixis pronouns is sometimes reduced to /ʼ/, e.g. *ʼwā=* ‘that’, *ʼnehe* ‘those’.

The demonstratives are similar to those of Aradhin, with a few divergences. Aradhin has an additional category not attested in Tin, ‘remembered’, with infixed *-x-* (Krotkoff 1982, 20): M *ʾawxāʾha*, F *ʾayxāʾha*, PL *ʾanxeʾhe*. In elicitation, however, similar Tin forms occurred: *ʾwāxā* ~ *ʾwāxa* ~ *ʾwāxaʾa* (M) and *yāxḏaʾa* (F) ‘that one’. These are formed from a demonstrative plus numeral ‘one’ and might be the origin of the Aradhin forms. It is not clear whether they have the same meaning, though.

Following prepositions, the demonstratives are prefixed with *d-* (< linker **d=*), after deletion of /ʾ(a)/, e.g., *bel dwā-gora l-dyā-baxta* ‘between that man and that woman’, *max dayya* ‘like this (F) one’. See Gutman (2018, 320–28; 2021) for why such demonstratives may be analysed as genitives.

The pronominal suffixes attached to nouns and prepositions (Table 7) are nearly identical to those in Aradhin. They may also be attached to the independent possessive pronoun, formed on *diy-* (as in Aradhin), e.g., *ʾawwa ʾile diyī* ‘This thing is mine’. As in many other dialects of north-western Iraq (e.g., Christian dialects of Aradhin, Dere, Hamziye, Işşin, and the ‘Aqra villages), the 3rd person singular suffixes are frequently reinforced with the independent possessive pronoun *diy-*, e.g., *ṭāle* ~ *ṭāle diye* ‘to him’.

The reflexive pronoun is formed on *gān-* ‘self’ (compare Aradhin *gyān-*) and the reciprocal pronoun is *ʾəxḏāḏe*, pronounced *ʾəḡḏāḏe*. The interrogative pronouns are listed in §3.4.

Table 7: Pronominal suffixes on nouns and prepositions

	Pronominal Suffix	On Noun	Gloss
3 MSG	-e ~ -e diye	bεθe~bεθe diye	'his house'
FSG	-a ~ -a diya	bεθa~bεθa diya	'her house'
PL	-εhən	bεθεhən	'their house'
2 MSG	-ux	bεθux	'your house'
FSG	-ax	bεθax	'your house'
PL	-oxun	bεθoxun	'your house'
1 SG	-i	bεθi	'my house'
PL	-an	bεθan	'our house'

2.2. Nouns

Masculine nouns usually end in *-a*, while feminine nouns usually end in a feminine inflection, either *-ta* or *-θa*. Unmarked feminines fall into the usual semantic categories for NENA (Coghill 2004, 200–3), e.g., *məṭra* 'rain', *ʾara* 'ground', *roḏāna* 'earthquake', and *ʾiḏa* 'hand'. Nouns with other endings may be masculine or feminine: e.g., *gāre* (M) 'roof', *lele* (M) 'night', *xūwe* (M) 'snake', *kāwe* (F) window, *ʾore* (F) 'manger', *kālo* (F) 'bride', and *məndi* (M) 'thing'.

A diminutive suffix attested is *-unka*, formed from Aramaic *-ona* and Kurdish *-ka*. This has an affectionate connotation, e.g., *yālunka zora* 'little boy'.

There are seven plural suffixes, whose distribution is lexically determined (Table 8). Some further examples of the reduplicated plural are: *boya* M 'hole', PL *buyāye*, and *xūwe* 'snake', PL *xuwāwe*.

Some nouns have irregular stems before the plural suffixes, e.g., *goṛa* 'man', PL *gūre* 'men'; *bεθa* 'house', PL *bātāne*; *brāta* 'girl, daughter', PL *bnāθa*; *brona* 'boy, son', PL *bnone*; *ʾiḏa* 'hand', PL

ʾiθāθa ~ *ʾidāθa*. The word for woman, *baxta*, does not have the old suppletive plural *ʾənše* found in many dialects, but a regular plural *baxtāθa*.

Table 8: Noun plurals

Suffix	Example	Gloss	Plural	Example	Gloss	Plural
-e	<i>dewa</i> (M)	‘wolf’	<i>dewe</i>	<i>kursa</i> (M)	‘chair’	<i>kurse</i>
-āne	<i>ṭūra</i> (M)	‘mountain’	<i>ṭūrāne</i>	<i>ṭara</i> (M)	‘door’	<i>ṭarāne</i>
-āθa	<i>kāwe</i> (F)	‘window’	<i>kawāθa</i>	<i>ṭupra</i> (F)	‘fingernail’	<i>ṭuprāθa</i>
-awāθa	<i>lele</i> (M)	‘night’	<i>lelawāθa</i>	<i>ʾore</i> (F)	‘manger’	<i>ʾorawāθa</i>
-wāθa	<i>xona</i> (M)	‘brother’	<i>xunwāθa</i>	<i>xāθa</i> (F)	‘sister’	<i>xaθwāθa</i>
-yāθa	<i>nāθa</i> (F)	‘ear’	<i>naθyāθa</i>	<i>xwarθa</i> (F)	‘friend’	<i>xwaryāθa</i>
-āCe	<i>gəra</i> (M)	‘hill’	<i>gərare</i>	<i>bərka</i> (F)	‘knee’	<i>bərkāke</i>

Some feminine nouns ending in *-ta* or *-θa* take *-e* as their plural: *pelavta* ‘shoe’, PL *pelāve*; *dabašta* ‘bee’, PL *dabāše*; *yabāšta* ‘raisin’, PL *yabiše*; *kuxūθa* ‘star’, PL *kuxwe*. These usually have referents that naturally come in pairs or en masse.

2.3. Adjectives

When used attributively, adjectives are placed after the noun. As generally in NENA, adjectives show at most a three-way distinction in gender and number: masculine singular, feminine singular, and common plural. There are two patterns of inflection in Tin adjectives, shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Adjective inflection

Pattern	Masculine	Feminine	Plural	Examples	Gloss
1	-a	-ta ~ -θa	-e	<i>xwāra</i> , <i>xwarta</i> , <i>xwāre</i>	‘white’
2	-a	-e	-e	<i>zara</i> , <i>zare</i> , <i>zare</i>	‘yellow’

Inflectional pattern 1, the inherited pattern, is by far the most common. Inflectional pattern 2, as elsewhere in NENA, is used for certain restricted sets of borrowed adjectives, including some

colours as well as human characteristics, e.g., *zara* ‘yellow’, *kora* ‘blind’, *karra* ‘deaf’, *lāla* ‘dumb’, *kačala* ‘bald’, *čarra* ‘albino’, and *randa* ‘good’.

Some loan adjectives do not inflect at all, e.g., *qahwāyi* ‘brown’ and *bnafši* ~ *mnaḫši* ‘purple’ (both from Arabic): *qalāma bnafši* ‘purple pen (F)’, *qalāme bnafši* ‘purple pens’. One loan adjective, *xoš* ‘good’, preposes the noun it modifies: *xoš baxte-la* ‘she is a good woman’.

2.4. Annexation Constructions

A genitive relationship between two (or more) nouns is usually expressed by means of the head-marking (construct) suffix *-ət*, e.g., *ṭəllət* = *ʾilāna* ‘shade of a tree’, *garmət* = *rošax* ‘your (F) shoulder blade’ (lit. ‘bone of your arm/shoulder’), *jullət* = *qurḏāye* ‘the clothes of the Kurds’. This usually assimilates in voice and other phonetic values, e.g., *nāšəd* = *dašta u nāšət* = *tūra* ‘the people of the plain and the people of the mountains’. Sometimes it is realised as the (more conservative) variant *-əd*, even without a trigger for voicing assimilation.

The older dependent marker or linker, *t* = (< **d* =), is also found, for instance when there is hesitation, e.g., *dəmmət* = *əni*, *dəmma...* *t* = *ʾeni* ‘tears of my eyes, tears... of my eyes’.

The old Aramaic apocopate construct is preserved in the following productive prefixes: *bi* = ‘house of’, *mar* = ‘owner of’ (cognate with *bēθa* and *māra*, respectively), e.g., *bi* = *xətna* ‘family of the bridegroom’, *mar* = *dəkkāna* ‘shop-owner’, *mar* = *šūla* ‘employer’. Other phonetically reduced (but innovated) construct forms are *bərt* = ‘son of’ (cf. *brona* ‘son’, C. Syriac *brā*), *brāt* =

‘daughter of’ (cf. *brāta* ‘daughter’), *bax* = ‘wife of’ (cf. *baxta* ‘woman, wife’). Examples: *bārt* = *xāθi* ‘my sister’s son’, *brāt* = ‘*amti* ‘my paternal aunt’s daughter’, *bax* = *bābi* (pronounced *bağbābi*) ‘my step-mother’. Mutzafi (2008, 92) calls the innovated apocopate construct forms ‘neo-construct’. They have perhaps appeared by analogy with the original construct forms. Note that Gutman (2018, 296) uses ‘neo-construct’ for the *-əd/-ət* marked forms.

2.5. Numerals and the Indefinite Article

The numerals 1–10 are given in Table 10. These numerals inflect for gender to agree with the noun counted, although sometimes the masculine is used for both. Before a noun, the stress usually shifts to the final syllable, and the numeral takes the main or only stress, e.g., *xammāš-baxtāθa* ‘five women’. The attributive forms for ‘one’ undergo shortening: *xa-* (M) and *ḏa-* (F).

Table 10: Numerals, independent and attributive (1–10)

	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight	nine	ten
M	<i>xā’a</i>	<i>trē ~ trə’e</i>	<i>ṭlāθa</i>	<i>’arba</i>	<i>xamša</i>	<i>’əšta</i>	<i>šawwa</i>	<i>tmanyā</i>	<i>təšša</i>	<i>’əṣra</i>
M	<i>xa</i>	<i>tre</i>	<i>ṭlāθá</i>	<i>’arbá</i>	<i>xamšá</i>	<i>’əštá</i>	<i>šawwá</i>	<i>tmanyá</i>	<i>təššá</i>	<i>’əṣrá</i>
F	<i>ḏa</i>	<i>tətté</i>	<i>ṭəlláθ</i>	<i>’arbé</i>	<i>xammāš</i>	<i>’əššət</i>	<i>’əšwá</i>	<i>tmāné</i>	<i>təššá</i>	<i>’əssár</i>

The indefinite specific article (‘a, a certain’) is identical to the attributive numeral ‘one’ and also inflects for gender: *xa-* (M) and *ḏa-* (F).

The numerals 11–19 are: *xadissar ~ xadəssar*, *trissar ~ trəs-sar*, *təltassar*, *’arbassar*, *xamšassar*, *’əštassar*, *šwassar*, *tmanessar*, and *čassar*. There are also *lento* forms: *xadi’əssar*, *tri’əssar*, *təltə’əssar*, *’arba’əssar*, *xamša’əssar*, *’əštá’əssar*, *šwá’əssar*,

tmāne'əssar, and *čá'əssar* (the stress position seems to be flexible in these forms).

The multiples of ten are: *'əsri* 'twenty', *ṭlāθi*, *'arbi*, *xamši*, *'əšti*, *šawwi*, *tmāne*, *təšši*. 'Hundred' is *'uṇṇa* and 'thousand' is *'alpa*. Combinations of tens and units are ordered with the unit second, e.g., *'əsri-u 'arba* 'twenty-four'. 'Hundred' is realised as *'əmma* following another numeral, e.g., *'arbá-'əmma* 'four hundred'. Year dates are given in the following way: *'alpa u təššá-'əmma u šawwi u xa'a* '1971 (lit. a thousand and nine-hundred and seventy and one)'.

Ordinal numerals are expressed by annexation constructions (see §2.4), with gender agreement, e.g., *nāšət = trə'e* 'second man', *baxtət = tətə* 'second woman'.

2.6. Verbs

In this section the morphology of verbs and pseudo-verbs (including copulas) is presented. As a Semitic language, the Tin dialect forms verb stems based on a (usually triradical) root, derivation ('stem'), and verbal base. This does not apply, however, to copulas and other pseudo-verbs. The Tin verbal system, as elsewhere in NENA, is augmented by analytical verb forms involving non-finite verb forms combined with copulas and other pseudo-verbs.

2.6.1. Derivational Patterns and Verbal Bases

There are four verbal derivational patterns attested: three triradical and one quadriradical. The bases used in the verbal system are formed according to the derivation (see Table 11, facing page). Notable is the short *a* vowel in *mbašəl* (Present Base and

Imperative), which historically was long (**mbāšel*). This is shortened, probably by analogy with the shortened vowel in the inflected forms, e.g., *mbašlan* ‘I (F) cook’. A similar process has occurred in some other dialects, such as Jewish Arbel (Khan 1999, 90–91, 98) and, optionally, Aradhin, e.g., *myaqir~mya:qir* ‘he honours’ (Krotkoff 1982, 26).

Table 11: Verbal bases

	I	II	III	Q
	<i>pθx</i>	<i>bšl</i>	<i>šlx</i>	<i>šxlp</i>
	‘to open’	‘to cook’	‘to employ’	‘to change’
Present Base	<i>paθx-</i>	<i>mbašl-</i>	<i>máplax-</i>	<i>mšaxəlp-</i>
Present Base (3MSG)	<i>pāθəx</i>	<i>mbašəl</i>	<i>maplax</i>	<i>mšaxləp</i>
Past Base	<i>pθəx-</i>	<i>mbušəl-</i>	<i>muplax-</i>	<i>mšuxləp-</i>
Imperative	<i>pθux</i>	<i>mbāšəl</i>	<i>máplax</i>	<i>(m)šáxləp</i>
Infinitive	<i>pθāxa</i>	<i>mbašole</i>	<i>maploxe</i>	<i>mšaxlope</i>
Verbal noun	<i>pθaxta</i>	<i>mbašalta</i>	<i>maplaxta</i>	<i>šaxlaptā</i>
Resultative Participle (M)	<i>pθixa</i>	<i>mbušla</i>	<i>múpəlxā</i>	<i>mšúxəlpā</i>
Resultative Participle (F)	<i>pθəxta</i>	<i>mbušalta</i>	<i>muplaxta</i>	<i>mšuxlaptā</i>
Active Participle (M)	<i>paθāxa</i>	<i>mbašlāna</i>	<i>mapəlxāna</i>	<i>mšaxəlpāna</i>

Like some other NENA dialects (Coghill 2015), Tin has borrowed at least one verb from Arabic along with its Arabic derivational morphology: *məḥtarome* ‘to respect’ (< Arabic *ḥrm* viii).

2.6.2. Verbal Inflection of Simplex Verbs

Simplex verbs are those verb forms that do not involve an auxiliary, i.e., forms based on the Present, Past, and Imperative bases. These take inflection on the bases themselves. The main person indexes are the S- and L-suffixes (Table 12, overleaf). The Infinitive and the Resultative and Active Participles, as nominal/adjectival forms, require auxiliary verbs, such as the copula, to lend them verbal force.

In some dialects, the Past Base may be inflected with S-suffixes indexing the subject, with passive or perfect function. This is ungrammatical in Tin.

Table 12: Verb inflection paradigms

	S-suffixes	Present Base with S-suffixes	L-suffixes	Past Base with L-suffixes
3 MSG	-Ø	<i>pāθəx</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>pθəxle</i>
FSG	<i>-a</i>	<i>paθxa</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>pθəxla</i>
PL	<i>-i</i>	<i>paθxi</i>	<i>-lē ~ ləhən</i>	<i>pθəxlē ~ pθəxləhən</i>
2 MSG	<i>-ət</i>	<i>paθxət</i>	<i>-lux</i>	<i>pθəxlux</i>
FSG	<i>-at</i>	<i>paθxat</i>	<i>-lax</i>	<i>pθəxlax</i>
PL	<i>-ūtun</i>	<i>páθxūtun</i>	<i>-loxun</i>	<i>pθəxloxun</i>
1 MSG	<i>-ən</i>	<i>paθxən</i>	<i>-li</i>	<i>pθəxli</i>
FSG	<i>-an</i>	<i>paθxan</i>		
PL	<i>-ax</i>	<i>paθxax</i>	<i>-lan</i>	<i>pθəxlan</i>

The Imperative is inflected for singular (-Ø) and plural (-un), e.g., *pθux* ‘open (SG)!’, *pθūx-un* ‘open (PL)!’ (cf. Aradhin *pθux*, *pθūxu*), *mbašlun* ‘cook (PL)!’, *mápəlxun* ‘employ (PL)!’, *mšáxəlpun* ‘change (PL)!’ Imperatives of *verba tertiae* /y/ in all derivations also distinguish between masculine and feminine singular, as does the irregular verb ‘*ʒl* I ‘go’ (see §§2.6.8–9). The Imperative takes initial stress, regardless of additional suffixes, as in many other NENA dialects, e.g., *mšáxəlpu* ‘change (PL)!’, *mšáxəlpunilē* ‘change (PL) them!’

2.6.3. Object Indexing on Simplex Verbs

Pronominal direct objects are usually indexed on the verb. With Present Base verbs, L-suffixes index the object and follow the subject-marking S-suffixes, e.g., *i-paθx-ax-la* ‘we open it (F)’ (Table 13, facing page). Pronominal objects are also indexed with L-suffixes on imperatives; see examples (1)–(2). Unlike with Present

Base forms, these L-suffixes do not alter the stress position in the verb itself. The Imperative plural ending *-un* is changed to *-ū-* before L-suffixes, or is suffixed by *-i-*: *-ūle ~ -un-i-le*.

Table 13: Object indexing on Present Base verbs

	S-suffixes	PRES-S-L(3MSG)	PRES-S(3MSG)-L
3 MSG	-Ø	<i>pāθəxle</i>	<i>pāθəxle</i>
FSG	-a	<i>pəθxāle</i>	<i>pāθəxla</i>
PL	-i	<i>pəθxile</i>	<i>pāθəxle ~ pāθəxlehən</i>
2 MSG	-ət	<i>pəθxətte</i>	<i>pāθəxlux</i>
FSG	-at	<i>pəθxatte</i>	<i>pāθəxlax</i>
PL	-ūtun	<i>pəθxūtunile</i>	<i>pāθəxloxun</i>
1 MSG	-ən	<i>pəθxənnē</i>	<i>pāθəxli</i>
FSG	-an	<i>pəθxanne</i>	
PL	-ax	<i>pəθxaxle</i>	<i>pāθəxlan</i>

- (1) *mbášəlle*
 ‘Cook (SG) it (MSG)!’
- (2) *mbášlūle ~ mbášlunile*
 ‘Cook (PL) it (MSG)!’

For Past Base forms, S-suffixes are only marginally available for the indexing of objects. 3FSG objects were accepted as grammatical, when suggested during elicitation, e.g., *xəzyāle* ‘he saw her’, but not 3PL or 3SG (*qṭəlle* can only mean ‘he killed’ and not ‘he killed him’). It may be that such forms are only recognised through familiarity with other dialects, or from the language of older generations of speakers who still use(d) them actively.⁷ Instead, pronominal objects in the past perfective are expressed via L-suffixes on the suppletive *qəṁ*-PRES form (§2.6.4), e.g.,

⁷ They are attested in Aradhin, based on fieldwork carried out in 1959 by Krotkoff (1982, 28).

qəmna'əsli 'It (M) bit me'. Direct objects of simplex verbs are never indicated with independent prepositional phrases.

Ditransitive constructions are those involving two objects, one direct (the theme or T) and one indirect (the recipient or R). Any indirect object that is nominal is flagged with the preposition *ta* 'to, for'. When one object is pronominal, this may be indexed on the verb as described above. An indirect pronominal object may be indexed on the verb or expressed with *ṭāl-* (*ta* with suffixes) e.g., *qəmdāmərre* (< *qəm-dāmər-le*) ~ *mərre ṭāle* 'he said to him'. When both objects are pronominal, under certain circumstances both may be indexed on a Present Base verb, namely when the direct object is 3rd person. In such cases the direct object is indexed first, followed by the indirect, both with L-suffixes. There are slight modifications to the 3FSG and 3PL direct object suffixes: *-lā-* and *-lēhən-i-*. Alternatively, the indirect object may be expressed with *ṭāl-*:

- (3) *pyawǎllele* ~ *pyawǎlle ṭāle*
'He will give it (M) to him.'
- (4) *pyawǎllāle* ~ *pyawǎlla ṭāle*
'He will give it (F) to him.'
- (5) *pyawǎllēhənilē* ~ *pyawǎllēhən ṭāle*
'He will give them to him.'

Table 14 (facing page) gives the paradigm of indirect pronominal objects on a 3MSG Present Base verb with 3MSG direct object:

Table 14: *Pyawəl-le* ‘he will give it (M)’ with varying indirect objects

3 MSG	<i>pyawǝllele</i>	‘he will give it to him’
FSG	<i>pyawǝllela</i>	‘he will give it to her’
PL	<i>pyawǝllele ~ pyawǝllelehən</i>	‘he will give it to them’
2 MSG	<i>pyawǝllex</i>	‘he will give it to you (MSG)’
FSG	<i>pyawǝllex</i>	‘he will give it to you (FSG)’
PL	<i>pyawǝlloxu(n)</i>	‘he will give it to you (PL)’
1 SG	<i>pyawǝlleli</i>	‘he will give it to me’
PL	<i>pyawǝllelan</i>	‘he will give it to us’

Imperatives follow the same pattern as Present Base forms, as in the following examples with *hal* ‘give!': *hǎllele* ‘Give (SG) it (M) to him!’, *hǎllāle* ‘Give (SG) it (F) to him!’

If the direct object is 1st or 2nd person, then if there is an indirect pronominal object, it cannot join it on the verb, but must be expressed with *tāl*-:

- (6) *pyawǝllax tāle*
‘He will give you (F) to him.’

This is an example of the Ditransitive Person-Role Constraint (Coghill 2010, 229).

2.6.4. Tense-Aspect-Mood Categories and Verbal Modifiers

The Past Base inflected with L-suffixes expresses the past perfective and is thus typically used in narrative, e.g., *xa = bēna θela ðà-baxta, | mǝrra tāla diya, mǎlax?* ‘once, a woman came, she said to her, “What’s the matter with you?”’. In certain contexts it may be interpreted as present perfect, e.g., *mǎn ngǝzle laxma?* ‘Who has eaten [taken a bite of] the bread?’

The Present Base inflected with S-suffixes may occur without a prefix as the present subjunctive, in which case it expresses deontic modality (jussive) or is part of a verbal complement.

Other tense-aspect-mood (TAM) values are expressed by means of prefixes on the Present Base or an auxiliary, with or without the complementiser *t=*, as shown in Table 15.

The TAM modifiers differ a little from those in Aradhin. In Aradhin the indicative present is *i-* ~ *yi-*. The future in Aradhin is the older form *bət-*, while the shorter form *b-* has a specialised function expressing the sequential (Krotkoff 1982, 32–33).

Table 15: TAM Modifiers of Present Base Forms

Modifier	Main function	Combined	Translation
Ø-	jussive	<i>paθxa</i>	‘let her open’
<i>t=</i>	complement	<i>guba t=paθxa</i>	‘she wants to open’
<i>i-</i>	indicative present	<i>i-paθxa</i>	‘she opens’
<i>p-</i>	future	<i>p-paθxa</i>	‘she will open’
<i>qəm-</i> -L	past perfective + object indexed	<i>qəm-paθxāle</i>	‘she opened it (M)’
<i>šuq-</i> -L <i>t=</i>	jussive	<i>šuqla t=paθxa</i>	‘let her open’
<i>lāzəm</i>	necessitive	<i>lāzəm paθxa</i>	‘she must open’

Future *p-* in Tin assimilates in voice and other phonetic values, e.g., *b-gora* ‘she will marry’, *m-mεθən* ‘I will bring’. The past perfective prefix *qəm-* is, as usual in NENA, used only when an object is indexed on the verb; otherwise, the inflected Past Base is used. The variant *qam-* is found in Aradhin. Tin *qəm-* appears to be a transitional form between *qam-* and Nineveh Plain *kəm-*. Note that a sequence of /mmC/ is reduced to /mC/, so *qəm- + mbašəlwāle* is realised as *qəmbašəlwāle* ‘he cooked it.’

Many of the above forms may be expanded by the *-wa* suffix, which is inserted directly after any S-suffix. This shifts the time reference back (Table 16, facing page):

Table 16: Verbal forms with *-wa*

	Main function	In combination	Translation
PAST- <i>wā</i> -L	remote past perfective	<i>pθāxwāla</i>	‘he opened, had opened’
<i>t</i> = PRES-S- <i>wa</i>	past complement	<i>gubewa t = pāθāxwa</i>	‘he wanted to open’
<i>i</i> -PRES-S- <i>wa</i>	past habitual	<i>i-pāθāxwa</i>	‘he used to open’
<i>p</i> -PRES-S- <i>wa</i>	counterfactual	<i>p-pāθāxwa</i>	‘he would have opened’
<i>qām</i> -PRES-S- <i>wa</i> -L	remote past perfective	<i>qām-pāθāxwāla</i>	‘he (had) opened it (F)’

The negator for verbs is *la*, which usually forms a stress group with the verb, the negator taking the main stress, e.g., *la=xzelan* ‘we didn’t see’. The indicative prefix *i-* combines with the negator to produce *le*, e.g., *i-pāθāx* ‘he opens’, *le-pāθāx* ‘he does not open’. The negator cannot combine with the future prefix *p-*. Instead, the negated indicative *le-* serves for both negated habitual and negated future: thus, *le-pāθāx* may also mean ‘he will not open’.

Unlike in some NENA dialects, as well as Semitic languages generally, the Imperative form can be negated. The negated Imperative has a sense different to that of the negated subjunctive. The former is an immediate imperative (regarding the current situation), whereas the latter is more general (including the future):

- (7) *la=pθūxun!*
‘Don’t (PL) open!’ (right now)
- (8) *la=paθxūtun!*
‘Don’t (PL) open!’ (in general)

This matches what Maclean (1895, 147) observed of the distinction. By contrast, Aradhin does not allow negation of the imperative form itself, but uses the negated subjunctive alone (Krotkoff 1982, 30, 39).

2.6.5. Copulas and Other Pseudo-Verbs

Like other NENA dialects, Tin has a variety of copulas, which can be used for non-verbal predication (equivalent of English *to be*). Like verbs, these are inflected, but not with the same kinds of stems or inflections (§§2.6.1–2): hence they are sometimes called ‘pseudo-verbs’ or ‘verboids’. There are also other pseudo-verbs, with functions expressing possession and ability, among other things. Copulas and other pseudo-verbs also combine with verbal nouns and participles to create analytical verb forms expressing a wider variety of TAM values (§2.6.6).

Tin has a present copula, a past copula, and a deictic copula. The present copula is enclitic only and the deictic copula is independent only (always preceding the predicate), while the past copula may be independent or enclitic. The copulas are marked in red in examples (9)–(16):

- (9) *māṭux=ila?* |
 ‘How **is she**?’
- (10) *hon làxxa.* |
 ‘**I am** here.’
- (11) *wɛwɛ tāma.* | ~ *tāma=wɛwɛ.* |
 ‘**They were** there.’

Both the present and past copulas may be negated, in which case the copula is always independent, standing before the predicate:

- (12) *lɛ làxxa.* |
 ‘**He is not** here.’
- (13) *qamāye là=wāwa hatxa.* |
 ‘Before, **it wasn’t** like this.’

The deictic copula is used when expressing location:

- (14) *xoni hole* gu ‘erāq. |
 ‘My brother **is** in Iraq.’
 (15) *kθāwa hole* š-mès. |
 ‘The book **is** on the table.’

It can also be used for temporary states occurring in the immediate present:

- (16) *hon snìqa.* |
 ‘**I am** in need (for now).’

Further TAM values are expressed with the verb *hwy* I ‘be’, e.g., *p-toya tāma* ‘she will be there’, *le-tāwi tāma* ‘they will not be there’, *wi randa!* ‘Be (MSG) good!’ The copula paradigms are presented in Table 17. Many forms have both short and long variants. The short variants have merged gender (and, to an extent, number) distinctions.

Table 17: Copulas

	Present	Negative present	Past	Deictic
3 MSG	=ile	le ~ lele	wewa ~ we	ho ~ hole
FSG	=ila	le ~ lela	wāwa	ho ~ hola
PL	=ilē	le ~ lele	wewa	ho ~ hole
2 MSG	=iwət	let ~ lewət	wətwa	hot ~ howət
FSG	=iwat	let ~ lewat	watwa	hot ~ howat
PL	=iwūtun	letun ~ lewūtun	wūtunwa	hotun ~ hówūtun
1 MSG	=iwən	len ~ lewən	wənwa	hon ~ howən
FSG	=iwan	len ~ lewan	wanwa	hon ~ howan
PL	=iwax	lex ~ lewax	wuxwa	hox ~ howax

The /i/ of the present copula merges with a final /a/ to /ε/, e.g., *grosa* ‘big’, *grosε=le* ‘he is big’.

The forms of the present copula are identical to those in Aradhin. The other copulas are very similar, with only minor differences. For instance, Aradhin has *hule*, *hula*, *hule* instead of *hole*, *hola*, *hole*, respectively, for the 3rd person deictic copula (Krotkoff 1982, 37).

The existential particles are *'əθ* 'there is/are', *ləθ* 'there is/are not',⁸ *'əθwa* 'there was/were', and *ləθwa* 'there was/were not'. These may be inflected with L-suffixes (§2.6.2) or B-suffixes (inflected identically, but with *b-*, rather than *l-*) to express predicated possession or ability, respectively. When combined with L-suffixes, the */θ/* is assimilated to the dental lateral, resulting in */tt/* (§1.3). Some examples are *'əttan* 'we have', *lāttəhən* 'they don't have', *'əθwālēhən* 'they had'.

With B-suffixes the */θ/* is not elided before the */b/*, as happens in other dialects. It is, however, assimilated in voice. Some examples are *'əðbə* ~ *'əðbəhən* 'they can', *ləðba* 'she cannot', *'əθwābi* 'I was able', *lāθwāboxun* 'you (PL) could not'.

Both L- and B-suffixes may also be attached to the intransitive verbs *hwy* I 'be' and *pyš* I 'remain' in the 3MSG:

- (17) *qəmtāwele bròna.* |
 'He has (just) had a son [born to him].'
 (18) *lā-qəmtāwebi.* |
 'I wasn't able' (at that moment)

⁸ Historically these were *'iθ* and *layθ*. The vowel in *'iθ* became */ə/* by analogy with forms where it has been reduced by the closure of the syllable (*'əθwa*, *'əðbe*, etc.). There was then further analogical spread of */ə/* to the negated existential.

- (19) *la=qəmpāyəslan bəskite.* |
 ‘We don’t have any biscuits left’ (lit. ‘There has not remained for us biscuits.’)

2.6.6. Analytical Verb Forms

The copulas and verb ‘be’ (*hwy* I) are used in a variety of analytical verb forms. For example, they may be combined with the resultative participle to express perfect or stative aspect. With transitive verbs this may be active or passive:

- (20) *hola nəsta l-kālba.* |
 ‘She has been bitten by a dog.’
 (21) *hole kəlya tāma.* |
 ‘He is standing there.’
 (22) *le pθixa.* |
 ‘It (M) is not open.’
 (23) *ho pθix-əlle.* |
 ‘He has opened it (M).’

Progressive aspect is expressed by the copula plus Infinitive:

- (24) *hon xāla.* |
 ‘I am eating.’
 (25) *we(wa) xāla.* | ~ *xāla-wewa.* |
 ‘he was eating’
 (26) *ptāwe xāla.* |
 ‘he will be eating’
 (27) *kmē=le pyāša?* |
 ‘How many are remaining?’

A perfect of recent past can be expressed by the deictic copula plus a Past Base form:

(28) *hò-xəʃlɛ.* |

‘They have just left.’

A dynamic passive may be expressed by the verb ’θy I ‘come’ plus Infinitive (with preposition *l-*):

(29) *bdāθe l-xāla.* |

‘It will be eaten, it is edible.’

Passives may also be expressed with *pyš* I ‘stay, become’ plus Resultative Participle:

(30) *p-pāyəs xila.* |

‘It will be eaten.’

Inception can be expressed with the auxiliary *šry* II ‘start’ plus Infinitive:

(31) *mšurela xāla.* |

‘He began to eat.’

2.6.7. Object Indexing on Analytical Verb Forms

Analytical verb forms involving a copula plus a participle or infinitive may index an object with cliticised prepositional phrases based on *-əll-* ‘to, on’. The final vowel of the non-finite verb is elided before *əll-*.

(32) *ho pθìx-əlla panjāra.* |

‘He has opened the window.’

(33) *we mpalòt-əlle.* |

‘He was taking them out.’

2.6.8. Weak Verbs

Concerns of space preclude presentation of all weak verb classes: in many cases the forms are predictable from the sound shifts identified in §1.4.2, e.g., *i-peša* < **i-payša* ‘she becomes’, *i-loša* < **i-lawša* ‘she dresses’. The following are some of the less predictable weak classes of verbs, as well as the historical shifts that have affected them.

Original *verba primae* /y/ in derivational Stem I have become *mediae* /y/, e.g., *lyp* I ‘learn’ (< **ylyp*), *qyð* I ‘burn (INTR)’ (< **yqð*). Excepted are doubly weak verbs, where the /y/ is preserved in its initial slot, i.e., *tertia* /y/ verbs *ypy* ‘bake’ and *ymy* ‘swear’; *mediae* /w/ verbs *ywš* ‘dry (INTR)’ and *ywr* ‘enter’; the *tertia* /w/ verb *ytw* ‘sit’; and the irregular verb *ywl* ‘give’. In all of these, the initial /y/ disappears when placed directly before a consonant, i.e., in the Past Base, Resultative Participle (F), Imperatives, and Infinitive, e.g., *ypy* I ‘bake’: *i-yāpe* ‘he bakes’; *peli* ‘I baked’; *yāpya* (M), *piθa* (F) ‘baked’; *pi* (M), *pε* (F), *po* (PL) ‘bake!’; *pāya* ‘to bake’.

Verba primae /ʔ/ Stem I have a Present Base which begins with /d/, e.g., *i-dāxəl* ‘he eats’, *gube d-dāxəl* ‘he wants to eat’, *qəm-daxlāle* ‘she ate it’, *b-daxli* ‘they will eat’; likewise *i-damra* ‘she says’, *i-dāšər* ‘he ties’, *i-dāwəð* ‘he does’, *i-dāzəl* ‘he goes’, *i-daθya* ‘she comes’, *i-dāsəq* ‘he goes up’ (cf. Syriac *slq*, but Alqosh *ysq*, Telkepe ʔsq). Sometimes the /d/ is omitted, e.g., *iyamrax* ~ *yamrax* ‘we say’. /ʔ/ placed directly before a consonant disappears, e.g., Past Base *xälle*. Other forms are: Resultative Participle (M) *xila*; Active Participle (M) ʔaxāla; Imperatives SG *xul*, PL *xūlun*;

Infinitive *xāla*. Other *verba primae* /ʔ/ are found among the irregular verbs (§2.6.9).

The *d*-prefixed Present Base is an unusual feature and not found in Aradhin. It has developed through reanalysis of the linking particle *d*= and/or the /d/ in the future prefix *bd-* (< **bəd-*) as part of the stem. In NENA there is a tendency in words beginning in laryngeals /ʔ/, /h/ or a vowel to attract consonants to replace the weak onset. Thus, for instance, J. Arbel has preserved the indicative prefix *k-* only with *verba primae* /ʔ/ (Khan 1999, 96). Likewise, the demonstratives have fused with the linker **d*= in Tin and other dialects when used in dependent position (§2.1). See Gutman (2018, 159–60) for the latter.

Original *verba mediae* /ʔ/ Stem I have become *mediae* /y/ in all forms, e.g., *ryš* I (< **rʔš* < **rḡš*) ‘wake up’ and *tyn* I ‘pick up’ (< **tʔn* < **tʕn*), although infinitives such as *ṭāna* (< **tʔāna*) were also accepted by an informant, perhaps through interference from other dialects.

Verba tertiae /y/ Stem I behave as in many other dialects, e.g., *xzy* I ‘see’: Present Base *i-xāze* ‘he sees’, *i-xazya* ‘she sees’, *i-xāzi* ‘they see’, *i-xāzūtun* ‘you (PL) see’; Past Base *xzeli* ‘I saw’; Resultative Participle (M) *xəzya*; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *xzi/xzε/xzo*; Infinitive *xzāya*.

Verba tertiae /ʔ/ Stem I are distinguished from *tertia* /y/ only in the Present Base: *šame*, *šama*, *šami* (contrast, respectively, *xāze*, *xazya*, *xāzi*). All other forms of *verba tertiae* /ʔ/ have become identical to those of *tertia* /y/, e.g., Infinitive *šmāya*, Imperative (F) *šmε*.

2.6.9. Irregular Verbs

The following are common irregular verbs in the dialect.

ʔzl I ‘go’ has suppletive forms with ʔxš I (< *rxš I): Present Base 3MSG *dāzəl*, 3FSG *dāza*, 3PL *dāzi*, Indicative 3MSG *i-dāzəl*; Past Base *xəšli*; Resultative Participle (M) *xiša*; Active Participle (M) *ʔaxāša*; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *si/se/so*; Infinitive *xāša*.

ʔy I ‘come’ behaves as a regular member of *Verba primae* /ʔ/, except for the Imperatives (SG/PL) *hayyu/hayyun*.

byy/bʔy I ‘want’: Present Base 3MSG *bāye*, 3FSG *bāya*, 3PL *bāyi*; Indicative 3MSG *gube*, 3FSG *guba*, 3PL *gubi*; Past Base *beli~bbeli*; Resultative Participle (M) *biyya*; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *bi/bε/bo*; Infinitive *bāya*. Note the indicative prefix on this verb is, uniquely, *g(u)-*, cognate with the *k-* found in many other NENA dialects.

ywl I ‘give’: Present Base 3MSG *yawəl*, 3FSG *yawa*, 3PL *yawi*; Indicative 3MSG *i-yawəl*; Past Base *wəlli*; Resultative Participle (M) *wila*; Active Participle (M) *yawāla*; Imperatives (SG/PL) *hal/hallun*; Infinitive *wāla*.

yðʔ I ‘know’: Present Base 3MSG *yaðe*, 3FSG *yaða*, 3PL *yaði*; Indicative 3MSG *i-yaðe*; Negated Indicative/future 3MSG *ləðe*, 3FSG *ləða*, Past Base *ðeli~ððeli*; Resultative Participle (M) *ðiyya*; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *ði/ðε/ðo*; Infinitive *ðāya*.

hwy I ‘be, become’ has a Present Base which begins with /t/, through a similar process as described for *verba primae* /ʔ/ (§2.6.8). Presumably the *d=* was assimilated in voicing to /h/ before the /h/ was deleted. The forms are as follows: Present Base 3MSG *tāwe*, 3FSG *toya*, 3PL *tāwi*; Indicative 3MSG *i-tāwe*; Past Base

weli ‘I became’; Resultative Participle (M) *huya*, (F) *hwiθa*; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *wi/wε/wo*; Infinitive *wāya*.

čyy I ‘be, become tired’ (< *čhy): Present Base 3MSG *čāye*, 3FSG *čāya*, 3PL *čāyi*; Past Base *čeli* ‘I got tired’; Imperatives (M/F/PL) *či/če/čo*; Resultative Participle (M) *čyya*; Infinitive *čāya*. Note that in *nhy* I ‘pant’, the /h/ is preserved and never elided.

3.0. Lexicon

Given in this section are the main members of some restricted lexical sets, as well as (in §3.6) words which are known to vary between NENA dialects.

3.1. Prepositions

The form in brackets is the stem which takes pronominal suffixes. *b-* (*abb-*) ‘in’, *gu* (*gāw-*) ‘in’, *ta* (*tāl-*) ‘for’, *max* (*maxwāθ-*) ‘like’, *baθra* (*baθr-*) ‘after’, *bel* (*bel-*) ‘between’, *m-* (*mānn-*) ‘from’, *kas* (*kāsl-*) ‘at the home of’, *š-* (*reš-*) ‘on’, *mən* (*mānn-*) ‘with’, *qam* (*qām-*) ‘in front of’, *xu* (*xoθ-*) ‘under’, *xarəḏwāna* ‘around’.

3.2. Spatial Adverbs

’axxa ~ *laxxa* ‘here’, *taṃāha* ~ *tama’ha* ‘over there’, *tamā’ha* ‘way over there’, *tāma* ‘there (absent)’, *haṭxa* ‘like this’, *hādax* ‘like that’, *’aləl* ‘above’, *’əltax* ‘below’, *baṛāye* ‘outside’, *gawāye* ‘inside’, *l-qāma* ‘forwards’, *l-baθra* ‘backwards’.

3.3. Temporal Adverbs

daha ‘now’, *’ədyo* ~ *’ədyu* ‘today’, *təmmal* ‘yesterday, tomorrow’, *’omaxənna* ‘the day before yesterday, the day after tomorrow’.

ʿadyo mǝllelə ‘this morning’, *qamθa* ~ *qamāye* ‘formerly’, *baθra-dēga* ‘then’, *jalde* ‘early, immediately’, *xa/ḏa-bēna* ‘once’.

3.4. Interrogatives

mā ‘what?’ (in isolation *mahá?*, with copula *mēhele* ‘What is it?’), *mani* ‘who?’, *ʿeni* ‘which?’, *māṭux* ‘how?’, *ʿimal* ‘when?’, *tamaha* ‘why?’.

3.5. Conjunctions

u ‘and’, *t* = complementiser, relativiser, e.g., *gube t=lāyap* ‘he wants to learn’, *gube d=dāzəl* ‘he wants to go’, *ʿāni t=i-xāyi gu* ‘*erāq*’ ‘those who live in Iraq’.

3.6. Miscellaneous

<i>gəra</i> M, PL <i>gərāre</i>	‘hill’ (N. Kurdish <i>gir</i> ‘hill, mound’)
<i>lʿarta</i> F	‘valley’ (metathesis from <i>raʿolta</i>)
<i>zabāša</i> M	‘watermelon’ (N. Kurdish <i>zebeš</i>)
<i>gundurta</i> F	‘musk-melon’ (N. Kurdish <i>gindor</i>)
<i>xəlya</i> M	‘milk’
<i>roša</i> M	‘arm’
<i>nobadāra</i>	‘guard’ (N. Kurdish <i>nobedar</i> ‘guard’)
<i>grosa</i>	‘big’
<i>milāna</i>	‘blue’
<i>zəvrāna</i>	‘rough’ (N. Kurdish <i>zivir</i> ‘harsh, rough’)
<i>randa</i> , <i>xoš-</i>	‘good’
<i>xanči</i>	‘some, a little, few’
<i>rāba</i>	‘very’, ‘many’
<i>p-ḥamde</i>	‘slowly’

<i>p-ḥand-~p-hand-</i>	‘slowly’, e.g., <i>tri p-handux</i> ‘drive slowly’
<i>grs</i> I	‘grow up’
<i>kly</i> I	‘stop, stand’
<i>nxθ</i> I	‘go down’
<i>fyr</i> I	‘fly’
<i>grp</i> I	‘push’
<i>šwr</i> I	‘jump, dance’

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FIVE ENIGMATIC NEO-ARAMAIC LEXEMES AND THEIR POSSIBLE ETYMOLOGIES*

Hezy Mutzafi

The present paper discusses five odd-looking NENA and Neo-Mandaic nouns that are documented in scholarly literature, but

* Data on Neo-Aramaic dialects is fieldwork-based unless a reference is furnished. Notes on transcription of Neo-Aramaic words: superscript + indicates suprasegmental pharyngealisation. The phoneme /ǧ/ is unaspirated, whereas /č/ is aspirated. Stress is penultimate unless otherwise indicated. Apart from the short vowel /ə/, vowels are generally short in closed syllables and in open unstressed final ones, and half long or long otherwise. The transcription of words taken from scholarly literature is adapted to this method. Literary Mandaic words are in boldface (following convention). Abbreviations: Akk. – Akkadian, Ar. – Arabic, Aram. – Aramaic, C. – Christian (NENA dialect), CM – Classical Mandaic, J. – Jewish (NENA dialect), J. Az. – Jewish NENA dialects of Iranian Azerbaijan, JBA – Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, LD – Lishana Deni (Jewish NENA dialects), lit. – literally, MH – Mishnaic Hebrew, mng – meaning, NA – Neo-Aramaic, NENA – North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic, NM – Neo-Mandaic, Syr. – Syriac, Targ. J. – Targum Jonathan, Targ. O. – Targum Onkelos, TZ – Trans-Zab (Jewish NENA dialects). Literary Aramaic lexemes with no reference given are based on *DJBA*, *MD*, *SL*, and *TS* (see References). Comparisons to Kurdish and Persian are based on Chyet (2020) and Steingass (1892), respectively.

remain etymologically opaque. As will be suggested below, all are inherited from earlier Aramaic strata and, in two cases (*bəllaná* ‘pocket’ and *šandoxa* ‘pestle’), appear ultimately to be derived from—or calqued on—Akkadian.

Far-reaching diachronic changes (in shape or meaning) during the long course of Aramaic history have considerably distanced most of the lexemes in question from their pre-modern precursors. Hence, their ancient antecedents cannot be unveiled or reconstructed by mere recourse to lexical, textual, or other sources of the various literary Aramaic languages.

Hitherto unattested archaic forms and cognates preserved in kindred NA dialects are therefore adduced as ‘missing links’, being crucial for elucidating the elusive historical backgrounds of some of these puzzling words, and for shedding light on the morpho-phonological and semantic processes that have led them to drift away from their ancient etyma and moulded them into the modern NA reflexes that they are today.

1.0. NENA *bəllaná* ‘pocket’

One of the most enigmatic NENA words is *bəllaná* ‘pocket’ and dialectal forms such as ⁺*bəlvaná*, all confined to some of the Trans-Zab (TZ) dialects, specifically to the Inter-Zab (Western) dialect cluster (in Erbil Governorate, Iraq, between the two Zab rivers) and the Jewish Azerbaijan (J. Az.) dialect cluster. No such word is known in literary Aramaic sources, nor is anything even

remotely similar to *bəllanā* found in any potential donor language (such as Kurdish, Persian, or Arabic).¹

The form *bəllanā* is typical of the Inter-Zab dialects, e.g., Rustaqa, J. Koy Sanjaq, Qaladze, and Arbel. The same form is also found in the J. Az. dialects of Şablagh (Mahabad) and Naqadeh. Other J. Az. cognates are ⁺*blanā* in Shino (Oshnavieh), ⁺*bəlvnanā* in J. Urmi, and *bəlmanā* in J. Salmas and Bashqala (Başkale).

The key to the etymology appears to be *bəllā* ‘pocket’, a hitherto unattested by-form of *bəllanā* in the Inter-Zab dialect of Dobe. It seems that *bəllā* is the crucial ‘missing link’ between *bəllanā* ‘pocket’ and older *bəlla* ‘gate’, attested in some of the Christian NENA dialects of the area of Mosul, e.g., in Tisqopa as *bəlla* ‘wooden gate of yard or sheep pen’, in Telkepe as *bəllb* ‘gate’, in Bariṭle as *bəlla* ‘door, gate’, and in Qaraqosh as *bəlla* ‘front door, gate’. NENA *bəlla* ‘gate’ derives from Akkadian *abullu* ‘city gate, gate of building’, whence also JBA אבולא ‘city gate’, CM **abula** ‘gate, gateway’, and other literary Aramaic parallels.

Assuming that Tisqopa (etc.) *bəlla* ‘gate’ is a cognate of Dobe *bəllā* ~ *bəllanā* and preserves the erstwhile meaning of the NENA etymon ⁺*abullā* ‘gate’,² the morphological and semantic

¹ The etymology “Kurdish” in Garbell (1965, 300a, s.v. *blana*, and 301a, s.v. *bəlwana*) is unwarranted. No etymology is provided in other scholarly sources, i.e., Mutzafi (2004, 177, 218b) and Khan (2008a, 496).

² The reconstructed early (or pre-) NENA form ⁺*abullā* is based on (1) the Syriac cognate spelled ܐܒܘܠܐ, in which the initial *ptāhā* indicates gemination of the following consonant *b*, and (2) the NENA form with

gaps between *bəlla* ‘gate’ in the Mosul dialects as opposed to *bəllanā* ‘pocket’ and various other TZ cognates mentioned above may be clarified as follows.

The form *bəllanā* ‘pocket’ most likely emerged via back-formation from the plural *bəllané*, considering that Dobe *bəllané* ‘pockets’ is the plural of both alternant forms *bəllanā* and *bəllā*. Similarly, *jbanā* ‘pocket’ in Saqiz, Bijar, and some other Hulaulā (Southern TZ) dialects, is clearly an innovation by back-formation from the plural *jbané*, itself a reflex of **jebané*, the plural of **jebā* ‘pocket’ (< Ar. جَيْب)—cf. Betanure *jeba* ‘pocket’, PL *jebane*, Halmun *jayba* ‘pocket’, PL *jaybane*.

Yet another TZ morphological parallel of *bəllanā* is *kapanā* (in some dialects reduced to *kpanā*) ‘shoulder’, which emerged through back-formation from the plural *kapané*—compare *kapa* ‘shoulder’, PL *kapane* in Lishana Deni (and already in JBA as כפא alongside older כתפא ‘shoulder’). To sum up:

Table 1: Back-formation in selected Trans-Zab nouns

Etymon	TZ SG by back-formation	Gloss
<i>bəllā</i> , PL <i>bəllané</i> (Dobe)	<i>bəllanā</i> (Inter-Zab)	‘pocket’
<i>jeba</i> , PL <i>jebane</i> (LD)	<i>jbanā</i> (Hulaulā) ³	‘pocket’
<i>kapa</i> , PL <i>kapane</i> (LD)	<i>kapanā</i> , <i>kpanā</i> (TZ)	‘shoulder’

The Shino form *+blanā* is probably a reduced dialectal variant of *bəllanā*, with word-pharyngealisation as in some other Shino

b (rather than *w* < **b*) and geminated *l*. Consider also the reduced late Syriac form ܠܐܠܐ (Duval 1888–1891, 1:367).

³ The J. Sanandaj parallel *jmanā* ‘pocket’ (Khan 2009, 573) derives from the same etymon *jbanā* < *jeba*, with a change *b* > *m*.

words with *l*, e.g., **massātā* > **māsala* > **misalā* ‘scales (for weighing); Libra’.

As for J. Urmi *+bəlvaná* (PL *+bəlvané*), one may postulate back-formation in this case as well: **bəllaná*, PL **bəllanawé* > **bəllawané* > J. Urmi *+bəlvané* > back-formation *+bəlvaná* (with pharyngealisation, as in Shino above). This process was perhaps reinforced by the influence of J. Urmi *+bərvaná* ‘apron’, itself from Persian پروان ‘stomacher; type of robe’ or Kurdish *bervanek* ‘apron’.

There remains *bəlmaná* ‘pocket’ in the J. Az. dialects of Salmas and Bashqala, with a change of labials **w* > *m*, not known to occur elsewhere in these dialects. This change does occur, however, in some other NENA dialects, e.g., **argōlē* (cf. Syr. *‘argel*) ‘roll, wallow’ > Qaraqosh *gar’olā* ‘wallow’ > Betanure *mgarwole* ‘wallow’ > Baz *garmole*, C. Urmi *ǰarmulā* ‘wallow’.

As regards the semantic change ‘gate’ > ‘pocket’, it most likely involved a transitional meaning, such as ‘opening, aperture, fissure’, followed by a narrowed meaning referring to an aperture in a garment, pocket. Indeed, the meanings ‘fissure’ and ‘opening’ are already found in literary Aramaic, as in (epigraphic) Mandaic **abulia gauia** ‘inner fissures’ (of the womb)’ (Morgenstern 2015, 273, 279)⁴ and Syr. *’abbullē ḥeššōkē ba-šmayyā* ‘dark openings in the sky’ (Takahashi 2004, 190, IV.iii.4).

Furthermore, the very semantic change ‘gate’ > ‘opening’ > ‘opening in a garment, pocket’ underlying the meaning of *bəllaná* is also manifested in the nearly synonymous Aramaic

⁴ Already in Akkadian *abullu* ‘gate’ also denoted certain bodily fissures (see CAD A1, 87b).

term *daššā* ‘door, doorway’, most notably regarding CM **diša** ‘door, entrance’ and the by-form **daša** ‘ritual pocket’, preserved in NM as *daššō* ‘a pocket in the upper right-hand side of the Mandaeen ritual garment’⁵—all harking back to Akk. *daltu* (> **daššu*) ‘door; opening’.⁶ Whereas CM **diša** ‘door’ preserves the erstwhile denotation (MD 109b; Morgenstern 2012, 166), the by-form **daša**, *daššō* ‘ritual pocket’ exhibits the same semantic innovation as that of *ballanā* (both, basically ‘gate, door’ > ‘opening’ > ‘pocket’).⁷

The term *daššā* as an aperture in a garment is perhaps manifested also in JBA, if the phrase תרי דשי in b. Shabbat 112a (in connection to MH מפתח חלוקה ‘the aperture of her robe’) is to be construed ‘two openings (in a robe)’.⁸

Thus, we have two Akkadian substrate words that shifted their meanings from ‘gate’ or ‘door’ to ‘pocket’ in Neo-Aramaic:

⁵ For the shape and ritual usage of this pocket see Drower (1937, 30, n. 2, 170).

⁶ As well as an opening in the flesh of a lamb or in the sky (CAD D, 55b, mng 1h). For Akk. *daltu* > Neo-Assyrian **daššu* > Aram. *daššā* see Kaufman (1974, 45), Huehnergard (2021, 1491), and CAL (s.v. *dš*).

⁷ Although the CM form **daša** is attested only as ‘ritual pocket’, the older meaning *‘door’ can safely be reconstructed, whence > *‘doorway, entrance’ > *‘aperture, opening’ > ‘pocket’.

⁸ Most manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud exhibit תרתי or תרי דשי, which was interpreted שני פתחים ‘two openings’ by Rashi. This interpretation is uncertain, however (see DJBA 302a, and the interpretation ‘two laces’ in Steinsaltz et al. 2012–2019, 3:166).

Table 2: The semantic change ‘gate’ > ‘pocket’ in Neo-Aramaic

Akkadian	>	Early Aramaic	>	Neo-Aramaic
1. <i>abullu</i>		<i>’abullā</i>		<i>bālla</i> (and vars.)
‘gate’		‘gate’		‘gate; door’
‘opening’		‘aperture, fissure’		‘pocket’
2. <i>daltu</i> (> <i>*daššu</i>)		<i>daššā, diššā</i>		<i>daššo</i>
‘door’		‘door’		—
‘opening’		‘ritual pocket’		‘ritual pocket’

2.0. NENA *čəmməsta* ‘louse nymph’

Many NENA dialects exhibit three different terms corresponding to the three major phases in the life cycle of lice, in particular head lice: (1) *nawa* ‘nit, egg of louse’, (2) *čəmməsta* ‘louse nymph, tiny immature louse’ (3) *qalma* ‘mature, fully-grown louse’.⁹ The latter is also used as a generic term for (any) ‘louse’.¹⁰ All three terms have dialectal NENA variants and cognates, as in the following six selected examples:

⁹ For the life cycle and biology of human lice and lice nymphs, see Alexander (1984, 29–55); and Mehlhorn (2022, where the nymph is called ‘larva’).

¹⁰ Including head louse, body louse, pubic louse; in some dialects also fowl louse, and even grain weevil (an entirely different insect).

Table 3: NENA terms related to lice

NENA dialect	‘nit’	‘louse nymph’	‘louse’
C. Aradhin	<i>nawa</i>	čəmməsta ¹¹	<i>qalma</i>
Bariṭle	<i>nawona</i>	čəmmesta	<i>qalma</i>
Betanure	<i>nota</i>	čəmmusta	<i>qalma</i>
Barwar	<i>nawa</i>	čəlməsta ¹²	<i>qalma</i>
Maha Khtaya-Baz	<i>nawa</i>	+čəmməsta	+čalma
Shwawwa-Baz	<i>nawa</i>	+čəlməsta	+čalma

The forms *nawa*, čəmməsta, and *qalma* are, by far, the most common NENA dialectal variants. Among these, only the terms *nawa* and *qalma* have transparent Aramaic etymologies (as in Syr. *nāḇā*, *qalmā*), and their dialectal cognates can readily be deemed derivatives thereof, as in *nawa* > *nawta* (e.g., in J. Atrush) > Betanure *nota*; and *qalma* > Baz +čalma (cf. common NENA *qamxa* > Baz +čamxa ‘flour’).

The etymology of the NENA term for ‘louse nymph’, čəmməsta, is challenging, since nothing similar is known to exist in literary Aramaic, nor in any other language.¹³ Fortunately, two major pieces of evidence from within Neo-Aramaic appear to be key to deciphering the etymology of this obscure word, as will be shown in detail below. Firstly, the cognate *təmməsta*, with initial *t*, occurs in at least two NENA varieties, J. Zakho and Nochiya.¹⁴

¹¹ Already in Krotkoff (1982, 123, with idiosyncratic transcription).

¹² Khan (2008b, 1079, 1260).

¹³ No such word could be found in any dictionary—or confirmed by any informant—of any neighbouring language. Kurmanji-Kurdish speakers furnished *nûtik* (as in Chyet 2020, 2:86b) or *nojik* for ‘louse nymph’.

¹⁴ The Nochiya form *təmməsta* was elicited from informants born in the Khabur-Assyrian village of Nochiya (Tall Fēḏa) in north-eastern Syria.

Secondly, we shall see that the Țuroyo equivalent *ṭa'mānto* 'louse nymph'¹⁵ is no less germane for resolving our 'tenacious' etymological riddle.

In the light of the above evidence, I should like to suggest **ṭā'em-m'eztā* 'hair-taster' as the antecedent of *čammāsta* (and its cognates), based on the verb **ṭā'em* 'he tastes' and the noun **m'eztā* 'a hair', both of genuine Aramaic origin.¹⁶ The development would be through the intermediary phases **ṭa'am'asta*,¹⁷ followed by *ṭammāsta*, itself preserved as a 'missing link' in J. Zakho and Nochiya (as mentioned above).

The change **ṭ > č* is well attested in some other NENA dialectal lexemes, as in the verbal root *ṭym* 'to close the eyes' (cf. Syr. *ṭmm* 'to shut'), preserved intact in Qaraqosh and Bariṭle > many other NENA dialects *čym*. The excrescent *l* in the Barwar and Shwawwa-Baz forms *čalmāsta*, ⁺*čalmāsta* has most likely emerged by analogy with the *l* of *qalma* 'louse'. The vowel *e* in Bariṭle *čammēsta* may well preserve the **e* of the second component **m'eztā*, reflected as *mēsta* 'a hair' in the same dialect.

The importance of the Țuroyo parallel *ṭa'mānto* to our case is the likelihood that its antecedent was morphologically akin—and indeed semantically identical—to the reconstructed NENA

Their ancestors lived in an area now within the district of Şemdinli, Hakkâri province, Turkey.

¹⁵ Gleaned from speakers of various Țuroyo dialects, such as Midyat, Mzizah, Anḥil, Ḥapsis, Bsorino, and more.

¹⁶ For the latter cf. Syr. *m'ezzē* (Audo 1897, 2:67b), JBA מַעֲזָה 'hair' (both PL); and the form מַעֲזָה (PL) 'goat-hair' in Targ. O.

¹⁷ Cf. Ko-Tyare *ṭā'am* 'he tastes', *m'asta* 'a hair', PL *m'əzze*.

etymon **tā'em-m'eztā* 'hair-taster'. The Țuroyo antecedent intended is **tō'em-mențo*, comprising **tō'em* 'he tastes' (> contemporary Țuroyo *to'am*; a cognate of NENA **tā'em*), and **mențo* (as in West Syriac) 'a hair', whence Țur. *manțo* 'a hair' (cf. the Țuroyo plural *mene*, Syr. *mennē*)

The reconstructed precursor **tō'em-mențo* would be expected to have yielded the form ***tə'manțo*, though, with the regular Țuroyo sound shifts **ō > *u > ə* in a closed syllable, as well as with *manțo* 'a hair', as in contemporary Țuroyo, with a regular sound shift **e > *ə > a* in a closed stressed syllable and with *t*. Nonetheless, the phonological irregularities underlying Țur. *ta'manto* as a postulated derivative of **tō'em-mențo* 'hair-taster' (**ō > a* instead of *ə*, **mențo > manto* with *ə* and *t* instead of *manțo*), can all be accounted for as rather late changes that occurred after the literal meaning of this term for 'louse nymph' had become opaque to modern Țuroyo speakers.

To be specific, the unexpected *a* of *ta'manto* may well reflect a change *ə > a* by partial assimilation to the pharyngeal *ʕ* [ʕ]; whereas the case of **mențo > manto* can hardly be elucidated on phonological grounds. It seems much more likely that this change was by analogy with the semantically related lexeme *ʔəšmanto* (also *šmanto*) 'a (tiny) little bit', a diminutive of *ʔəšmo* 'name; a little bit',¹⁸ in connection to the tiny nature of a louse nymph.

The presumed influence of *ʔəšmanto* on **tō'em-mențo > ta'manto* might be buttressed by some NENA dialects where a louse nymph represents a quintessential model of a very small

¹⁸ For an etymological analysis of *ʔəšmo*, *ʔəšmanto*, favouring a native origin from *ʔəšmo* 'name', see Tezel (2003, 92–93).

quantity or size, e.g., in J. Zakho *xá-ṭammāsta* ‘a tiny little bit’,¹⁹ and in Ashitha *daqíqe-le* ‘ax *čəmmista* (sic) ‘he is so tiny!’ (lit. ‘he is as tiny as a louse nymph’, said of a new-born, e.g., a puppy). A striking semantic parallel is Qaraqosh and Bariṭle *xanawa* ‘a little bit’,²⁰ no doubt from *xa nawa* (< **ḥad nāḥā*) ‘a nit’.

Further evidence for the etymology **ṭā‘em-m‘eztā* ‘hair-taster’ > *čəmmāsta* ‘louse nymph’ can be seen in the fact that, whereas in most NENA dialectal cognates the plural form is *čəmmasyaṭa*, certain NENA dialects preserve archaising plural forms phonetically more closely related to **m‘ezzē* ‘hair, hair strands’ (> contemporary NENA dialects *m’əzze*, *məzze*, etc.), the reconstructed plural of the second component **m‘eztā*, as in the following three NENA dialects:

Table 4: Dialectal NENA terms for lice nymphs and hair

Gloss	Arosh	Ashitha	Telkepe
1. ‘louse nymph’	<i>čəmmāsta</i>	<i>čəmmista</i>	<i>čəmmāstv</i>
2. ‘a hair’	<i>māsta</i>	<i>māsta</i>	<i>məzzetv</i>
3. ‘lice nymphs’	<i>čəmməzze</i>	<i>čəmmize</i> ²¹	<i>čəmməzə</i>
4. ‘hair strands’	<i>məzze</i>	<i>məzze</i>	<i>məzzə</i>

Accordingly, perhaps the erstwhile NENA singular form was the compound **ṭā‘em-m‘ezzē* ‘taster of hairs’, and after its compo-

¹⁹ As in *xá-ṭammāsta la šqalli mənnox* ‘I didn’t take anything whatsoever (lit. ‘a louse nymph’) from you’ (in a tale by Mr Zaki Levi, Jerusalem, 2005).

²⁰ Whence also a diminutive form *xanawunta* ‘a little bit; a tiny little bit’ in Qaraqosh (Khan 2002, 288).

²¹ Also *čəmmasyaṭa*.

nents and their literal meaning had become opaque, it was reanalysed and construed as a plural form, whence the innovative singular **ṭā'em-m'eztā* by back-formation.

The possibility of **ṭā'em-m'ezzē* 'taster of hairs' being the older singular form is enhanced by similar NENA zoonyms based on compounds of an agentive verb and a plural noun ending in *-e*, e.g., **mā'eṣ-'ezzē*, lit. 'goat-sucker' > Marga *maṣəzze* 'lizard', **šālē-nūnē*, lit. 'fish-snatcher' > Ko-Ṭyare *jale-nune* 'kingfisher' (cf. Syr. *šālē nūnē* 'heron'), **'ākel-'aprē*, lit. 'earth-eater' > Lizin-Ṭyare *'axəlpə* 'earthworm', etc. Be that as it may, the direct singular precursor of all contemporary NENA cognates was, in all likelihood, **ṭā'em-m'eztā*.

As for the reasoning behind an imaginative term such as 'hair-taster', it may well be connected to the fact that newly hatched louse nymphs are firmly attached to shafts of hair for some time before descending to the scalp to feed.²²

Such creative picturesque compounds and other innovative lexical constructions are abundant in NENA. Indeed, various NENA dialects evince no less imaginative innovations in the domain of animal names, some of them without any biological background, e.g., Marbishu *banya-kake* 'gecko', lit. 'teeth-counter', Harbole *xasla-məṭre* 'salamander', lit. 'weaner of rains', Ashitha *qaṣa-qūṭe* 'earwig', lit. 'pincher of vulvas', C. Urmi *spaditə xuvva* 'snail', lit. 'snake's pillow' and Tisqopa *masərqət xuwwə* 'centipede', lit. 'snake's comb'.

²² See the photo in Alexander (1984, 33).

3.0. NENA *hawga*, *hoga* ‘vapour’

Some NENA dialects evince the term *hawga* (and dialectal cognates) for vapour, in most dialects specifically vapour coming out of the mouth (of a human or an animal), breath visible in cold weather. It already occurs in seventeenth-century J. Nerwa texts,²³ and is found in a considerable number of other NENA dialects in the same sense of ‘vapour from the mouth’, e.g., in Sharmin, Dure, and Lizin-Ṭyare *hawga*; Ashitha, Alqosh, Tisqopa, Betanure and Tkhuma *hoga*;²⁴ and Borb-Ruma Bohtan *hüga* (< **hawga* < **hewga* < **hawga*). In some other dialects *hawga* or *hoga* evinces a broader denotation of steam and vapour in general, e.g., as regards Baz *hawga*, C. Salmas *hoga*, and C. Urmi *hoja*.²⁵

Although no such lexeme could be found in literary Aramaic, the term in question seems to be of genuine Aramaic provenance, since nothing relevant has been found in any potential donor language. Suggestions in this direction have indeed been made, the first of which being the idea that *hoga* stems from pre-

²³ See Sabar (1983, 423, lns 2–3) הוגד ספואתיה (likely *hogəd səpwaṭeh*) ‘the vapour of his lips (i.e., his exhalation of breath)’, Sabar (1984, 173, ln. 11) בהוגד פומוך (likely *b-hogəd pummox*) ‘with the vapour (i.e., breath) of your mouth’.

²⁴ For Betanure see Mutzafi (2008, 142, no. 35): *mən qarṭa hoga gnapəqwa mən pəmməd nāše* ‘vapour would come out from people’s mouths due to [the intensity of] the cold’.

²⁵ For C. Urmi see Khan (2016, 3:155); and consider also Maclean (1901, 73a) *hoga* ‘steam, mist, vapour’, Sabar (2002, 149a) *hoga* ‘mouth vapour’.

modern Aramaic *hgy* (Sabar 1976, 138b), essentially ‘ponder’, which is unlikely. Other tentative solutions were that *hoga* and its earlier form *hawga* could perhaps be a blend of *hawa* ‘air’ (< Ar. هَوَاء) and **lahgā* ‘vapour’ (cf. Syr. *lahgā* ‘vapour, steam; heat’) or of **hablā* (cf. CM **habla** ‘steam, vapour’) and **halgā* ‘vapour’ (Mutzafi 2008, 352a).

These proposals should now be evaluated in the light of Hertevin *halga* ‘vapour from the mouth’, a precious ‘missing link’ elicited from my informants some years ago. It is finally clear now, I trust, that the etymon must be *lahgā* ‘vapour’, as in Syriac, and that its metathesised reflex *halga*, preserved in Hertevin, is the direct antecedent of *hawga* and *hoga*.

The postulated change *l* > *w* in *halga* > *hawga* is highly irregular, however, possibly even unique to this case throughout NENA. Nonetheless, a very similar change, *r* > *w*, yielding the diphthong *aw*, is manifest in a semantic equivalent of *hawga* within NENA, viz. Mer *hawhara* ‘vapour from the mouth’ as a cognate of Gaznakh *harhura* ‘vapour from the mouth’, both from early NENA **harhārā*, related to Syr. *harhārā* ‘fata morgana’. The aberrant nature of these phonetic changes (*al* > *aw*, *ar* > *aw*) in the framework of NENA might suggest that the motivation for both **halga* > *hawga* and **harhārā* > *hawhara* was not purely phonological, but rather mainly based on analogy of these terms for vapour with the common NENA word for ‘air’, the Arabic loanword *hawa*.

My former abovementioned idea, suggesting a conflation with **hablā* ‘vapour’, should probably be discarded, however,

since no reflex of such an etymon (or any other derivative of Aram. *hbl*) is known to exist in any of the NENA dialects.

4.0. NENA *šandoxa* ‘pestle’, *šandoxta* ‘grinding stone’

Another hitherto undetected etymon is that of the term *šandoxa* ‘cylindrical stone pestle (for crushing grain in a mortar); oval or round hand-sized grinding stone used for crushing (e.g., nut kernels, tobacco) or pounding (meat)’ in the Jewish NENA dialect clusters of Lishana Deni and Barzani.²⁶

Closely-related forms are found in various Christian NENA dialects, mostly with the feminine ending *-ta*, e.g., Ṭyare, Tkhuma-Gawaya, Gaznakh and Bariṭle *šandoxta*, Haṣṣan *šanduxta* ‘grinding stone, hand-sized round stone used for crushing or pulverising (nuts, tobacco, sesame, medicinal herbs)’ upon a flat grinding slab of stone called in some dialects *šata*.²⁷ In Ṭyare the same *šandoxta* is also used for levelling and smoothing plaster over a wall or the floor.

In some NENA dialects the only meaning of this term is the latter Ṭyare one above, as in Marga *šandoxta*, Barwar *šanduxta* ‘stone used for smoothing and polishing plaster on a wall’.²⁸ The meaning ‘grinding stone’ must have existed, however, in (the history of) these dialects as well, being preserved in the saying *npälle*

²⁶ Attested, inter alia, in Sabar (2002, 301a) with Kurdish mentioned as a tentative questionable etymology.

²⁷ < *šā‘ā, cf. the Hertevin cognate for this stone, *ša’ta*, as well as Syr. šā‘ā ‘smooth; smooth stone’.

²⁸ For Barwar see Khan (2008b, 1407; 1686, nos 20, 22).

bel šata w šandoxta (e.g., in Marga) ‘he is between a rock and a hard place’, lit. ‘he fell between a grinding slab and a grinding stone’; and, similarly, *pišli bel-šata l-šanduxta* ‘I am done for’, in Barwar (Khan 2008b, 1403, 1407).

A few Christian NENA dialects also exhibit a masculine form alongside *šandoxta*, e.g., Lizin-Țyare *šandoxa* ‘an oblong or round smooth stone larger and heavier than *šandoxta*, used for playing *pəşange* ‘a game of heavy stone throwing’ (a bit similar to the Scottish *stone put* or the Swiss *Steinstoßen*), and Barwar *šandoxa* ‘a large *šanduxta*’.²⁹

The erstwhile meaning of *šandoxa*, *šandoxta*, etc. is, in all likelihood, ‘stone pestle’ or ‘grinding stone’, as reflected in all dialects (or at least fossilised in the abovementioned sayings). Although not found in literary Aramaic, the complete absence of the term in question from any potential donor language suggests that it might be of inherited Aramaic stock.

I would consider *šandoxta* to be the oldest dialectal NENA cognate, and venture to suggest that it is a reflex of an unattested pre-modern Aramaic antecedent **šenʾmdōktā* ‘stone pestle’, a compound based on **šen* and **mdōktā*, lit. ‘tooth of mortar’, with **šen* as the construct form of **šennā* ‘tooth’ (as, e.g., in Targ. O.)³⁰ and *mdōktā* ‘mortar’ as in Targ. O. ܣܢܕܩܬܐ (Cook 2008, 145).

Although the Semitic root of postulated NENA **mdōktā* is *dkk* (as, e.g., in Akk. *dakāku* ‘to crush’, *madakku* ‘mortar’), it was

²⁹ See Khan (2008b, 346, 1407; 1496, no. 15; 1498, no. 25; 1790, no. 37).

³⁰ Consider Targ. O. ܣܢܐ ‘tooth’ (construct, Deut. 32.24), ܣܢܐ ‘tooth’ (Exod. 21.24 *et passim*); and see Cook (2008, 287).

evidently degeminated and the *k* was fricativised, at least in some dialectal Aramaic cognates of Akk. *madakku*, such as Targ. O. above, as well as in the Syriac form *mḏāktā* alongside the geminated variants *mḏakkəṭā* and *mḏākkəṭā* ‘mortar’ (SL 714b; Audo 1897, 2:35b).³¹

The structure of the reconstructed early NENA form **mḏōktā* and its later NENA reflex **mḏoxta* fits well into the rather common NENA nominal pattern CCoCta, as in Ashitha *qloṣta* ‘yoghurt cream’, Betanure *šmo’ta* ‘rumour’, ‘Amidya *r’olta* ‘shivering; a shudder’, C. Aradhin *ṣwota* (< **šbo’tā*) ‘dye’, Bijar *srotā* (< **sroḡtā*) ‘wooden ladle’, etc.

The form **mḏoxta* presumably lost its *m* following the **n* of **šen*, and the fricative *ḏ* changed into a stop *d* by partial assimilation with that same stop **n* (**šenmḏōktā* > **šendoxta* > **šəndoxta*).³² The change *o* > *u* is regular in closed syllables in various NENA dialects, e.g., Haṣṣan *šənduxta*. The forms *šəndoxa* and *šandoxa* are likely derived from the feminine *šəndoxta* by

³¹ The degeminated root *dwk* is found also in Hebrew cognates: דָּבַקוּ בַּמִּדְכָּה ‘they pounded [it] in the mortar’ (Num. 11.8), and likewise in MH, e.g., הִנְיֻדִּיקִין ‘the mashed [ingredients]’, מְדוּכָה ‘mortar’ (m. Tevul Yom 2.3). For another such case of degemination and restructuring of an Aramaic noun, consider Syr. *mšannā* ‘whetstone’ (*šnn*), a cognate of Ar. مَسْنَى ‘whetstone’, alongside the degeminated Syr. by-forms *mešnā*, *mušnā*, *mašnā* (TS, 4233; Audo 1897, 2:582a) and the form *māšna* ‘whetstone’ throughout NENA.

³² For **nḏ* > *nd* consider Betanure **nḏāyā* > *ndaya* ‘to leap’, Ṭyare **kawəḏna* > *kawədna* ‘male mule’ (F *koḏənta*).

back-formation. The change to *a* in postulated *šāndoxa* > *šāndoxa* (in certain dialects) is, however, highly irregular.³³

The metaphorical imagery of a stone pestle as a tooth (in particular, a molar tooth), grinding inside a mouth-like mortar, should be deemed plausible in view of other connections between ‘molar tooth’ and a device for grinding or milling in NENA and elsewhere, e.g., Bne Romta-Ṭyare *’ərxawāṭa* ‘molar teeth’ (SG *’ərxoṭa* by back-formation) as a derivative of *’ərxē* ‘water-mill’ (PL *’ərxāṭa*), and already Syr. *rhāwātā* ‘molar teeth’, essentially PL of *rahya* ‘mill’; as well as Barwar, Ashitha *garosta*, Qaraqosh, Marga *garusta*, Mer, Haṣṣan *garəsta*, all ‘quern; molar tooth’. Similarly, Akkadian *erū* ‘millstone’, cognate with Aram. *rahyā* ‘mill, millstone’, probably denoted ‘molar tooth’ as well (Stol 2018, 747, 748). Further afield, the same semantic connection is reflected in Latin *molaris* ‘grindstone; molar tooth’ (whence English *molar*), derived from *mola* ‘mill, millstone’.

It might also be that early NENA **šennā*, represented in **šen mḏōktā*, denoted specifically ‘molar tooth’, given Proto-NENA **kakkā* as the generic term for ‘tooth’, as well as *šeno* ‘molar tooth’ in some of the Ṭuroyo dialects (Tezel 2003, 233, n. 95).

NENA **šen mḏōktā* can hardly be disconnected from the equivalent Akkadian (Standard Babylonian) term *kak madakki* ‘pestle’, with *madakki*, a genitive form of *madakku* ‘mortar’³⁴ (a

³³ Perhaps by analogy with *a* in **ša’ta* ‘grinding slab’ (see above), though hitherto not attested in these particular dialects.

³⁴ See AHW (2:571b). Since *kak madakki* is a synonym of *bukannu* ‘pestle’ (AHW 2:571b; CAD M1:9a), AHW’s definition ‘pestle’ is clearly preferable to that of CAD (K:56b, mng 4b) ‘shaft of the pestle’. Note also that

cognate of Aram. *mḏōḫtā*) preceded by a construct form of *kakku* ‘weapon; tooth’ (a Sumerian loan). Although the meaning ‘tooth’ is not registered in Akkadian dictionaries, where the primary definition of *kakku* is ‘weapon’, this meaning was clearly part of the semantic scope of *kakku*, as has recently been shown by Stol (2018, 747).³⁵ Our postulated NENA etymon **šen mḏōḫtā* was, therefore, likely a calque on Akkadian ‘tooth of the mortar’, or rather ‘molar tooth of the mortar’, as follows:

Table 5: Akkadian and NENA ‘(molar?) tooth of mortar’ as ‘pestle’

Akkadian	Early NENA ³⁶	Contemporary NENA
<i>kak madakki</i>	<i>*šen mḏōḫtā</i>	<i>šəndoxta</i> (and variants)
‘pestle’	‘pestle’	‘pestle; grinding stone; stone for smoothing plaster’

madakku signifies ‘mortar’ (CAD D:43b; AHw 2:571b) rather than ‘pestle’ (CAD M1:9a).

³⁵ Akk. *kakku* as ‘tooth’, attested only in connection to animals (Stol 2018, 747), is undoubtedly the etymon of Eastern Aram. *kakkā*. The latter initially referred to a large tooth such as a molar (the primary meaning of JBA ככא, Syr. *kakkā*, CM *kaka*, likewise NM *kakkō* ‘molar’), or a tusk of an elephant (Syr. *kakkā d-ḫilā*) or of a wild boar or a pig (in JBA—see Morgenstern and Ford 2017, 199–200). NENA **kakkā* > *kaka* (and dialectal variants) evinces a semantic broadening into the meaning ‘tooth’ in general, having replaced inherited Aramaic **šennā* ‘tooth’.

³⁶ To be precise, the Aramaic progenitor of NENA, contemporaneous with Akkadian.

5.0. Neo-Mandaic šəwuyɔ ‘jackal’

Another intriguing Neo-Aramaic word is NM šəwuyɔ ‘jackal’.³⁷ To be sure, no such zoonym occurs in literary Aramaic or in any other relevant language.

As will be clarified below, NM šəwuyɔ ‘jackal’ is in all likelihood a doublet of šəwuyɔhɔ, the NM term for ‘demon’, itself attested in CM as šibiaha ‘one of the seven planets (known in antiquity); a planetary demon’, a cognate of Syr. šbī‘āyā ‘seventh; the seven planets’.³⁸ Thus, whereas NM šəwuyɔhɔ ‘demon’ preserves the ancient meaning and nominal structure of šibiaha—likely by virtue of the impact of Mandaean clergy’s knowledge and oral usage of this CM term—the same noun presumably evolved, over many centuries of Mandaic history, into šəwuyɔ ‘jackal’ (as a demonic creature), possibly as follows: *šibyāhā (CM šibiaha) > šəwuyɔhɔ ‘demon’ (as still in NM) > *šəwuyɔ > *šəwɔyɔ > NM šəwuyɔ ‘jackal’.³⁹

³⁷ Already in early modern Mandaic, appearing in the seventeenth-century Mandaic *Glossarium* as šibuia (see Mutzafi 2014, 86). Cf. also MD (459a) šibuia, correctly attributed to colloquial (i.e., modern) Mandaic, but wrongly defined as ‘deer’ instead of ‘jackal’.

³⁸ See MD (459b); and consider the ancient Mesopotamian background of this mythological concept, as reflected in Akk. *sibittu* ‘a group of seven; the seven demons; Pleiades as astral representation thereof’ (Konstantopoulos 2015, 310–20, Verderame 2016, 111–12).

³⁹ With ɔ > u following w; or adapted to the NM nominal pattern CəCuyɔ (to which nouns such as bəzuyɔ ‘hole’, pəquyɔ ‘crack’, and kəluyɔ ‘kidney; testicle’ belong).

As regards the postulated semantic change ‘demon’ > ‘jackal, a strikingly similar (albeit inverse) semantic parallel, whereby an Aramaic word for ‘jackal’ shifted its meaning to ‘demon’, is manifested in JBA ירורא ‘a type of demon (probably a jackal-spirit)’, from *yārōrā* ‘jackal’,⁴⁰ as also in Syriac and some other Aramaic languages, and earlier as ירורין ‘jackals’ (Targ. J. to Isa. 13.22).⁴¹

The case of Aram. *yārōrā* ‘jackal’ > JBA ‘demon’ indicates that the jackal was likely perceived as a demonic animal by some Aramaic-speaking communities of Late Antique Mesopotamia, possibly as a wicked, abominable animal that could transform itself into an evil spirit. As to the shift ‘demon’ > ‘jackal’ in Mandaic—the danger of contracting rabies through a bite of a rabid jackal (even in modern times)⁴² quite possibly contributed to the assumed perception of the jackal as a diabolical creature, especially in connection to aggressive, frenzied and often drooling, rabies-stricken jackals and their fatal bites. Such a jackal is called **šabuia šidana** ‘possessed (or mad) jackal’ in a nineteenth-century Mandaic manuscript, in the context of writing an amulet for anyone who was bitten by a rabid jackal (Mutzafi 2014, 87).

⁴⁰ See *DJBA* (496b), including the bibliography cited therein, in particular Levene (2013, 7, n. 30, 147a).

⁴¹ For the distribution of this Aramaic lexeme see *CAL* (s.v. *yrrw*). As was shown by Talshir (1981, 182–83), the same term also referred to a type of owl in some Aramaic sources and varieties.

⁴² According to a NM informant from Khorramshahr, jackals at the outskirts of her town were very much feared in her youth in the 1950s, as some were aggressive or rabid.

Similar associations of various other nocturnal predators with malicious spirits are evident in some other languages of the world, such as Pashto *levə* ‘wolf’ and its cognate *lū* ‘dangerous forest animal’ in Indus Kohistani (an Indo-Aryan language of northern Pakistan), both from **daēvya-* or **daiwiya-* ‘demonic (animal), itself a derivative of *daēva* ‘demon’ (as in Avestan) (Morgenstierne 2003, 45; Hassandoust 2011, 1:289; Zoller 2005, 365b, 368b). Examples from less ‘exotic’ languages concern the marsupial known in English as *Tasmanian devil* (in short, *devil*),⁴³ and calques in various other languages, e.g., Arabic شيطان تسمانيا ‘Tasmania’s devil’ or عفريت تسمانيا ‘Tasmania’s demon’, and Israeli Hebrew שד תסמני ‘Tasmanian demon’; as well as *Indian devil* as a term for the puma or the wolverine in (some varieties of) American English (OED, s.v. *Indian*).

6.0. Conclusions

The present paper offers comparative etymological studies of five lexemes in the NENA dialects (§§1.0–4.0) and Neo-Mandaic (§5.0), all hitherto of unknown etyma: (1) *bəllanā* ‘pocket’, (2) *čəmmāsta* ‘louse nymph’, (3) *hawga* ‘vapour’, (4) *šandoxa*, *šəndoxta* ‘pestle, grinding stone’, and (5) *šəwuyə* ‘jackal’. The proposed etymologies elucidate the possible semantic, conceptual, and morphological pathways underlying the evolution and formation of each of these lexemes. Mechanisms of word-formation,

⁴³ The ‘devilish’ reputation of this predator might be associated with its ferocious nature, dangerous bites and chilling nocturnal screech (see Hutchins et al. 2004, 12:281–82, 288).

as well as ‘missing links’, are widely adduced. Akkadian influences are discussed as regards two of these lexemes: *bəllanā* ‘pocket’, ultimately from Akkadian *abullu* ‘gate’, and *šandoxa*, *šəndoxta* ‘pestle’, presumably reflecting **šen mḏōktā* ‘molar tooth of mortar’ as a calque on Akkadian *kak madakki*.

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ANIMALS IN THE WESTERN NEO-ARAMAIC PROVERBS OF MA'ĪLŪLA

Werner Arnold

The late Ẓarẓūra Ruzḳalla was a teacher of English who died on 10 May 2017 at the age of 80. He created many songs that are very popular in Ma'īlūla (Arnold 2002). He also collected proverbs and gave me an audio cassette with 366 Western Neo-Aramaic proverbs, of which I have so far published only a few (Arnold 2008). From this assemblage I would like to publish in this *Festschrift* a few proverbs in which animals occur, in the hope of giving some pleasure to the jubilarian, Geoffrey Khan, my friend and colleague of many years.

1.0. Types of Animals in the Western Neo-Aramaic Proverbs

Only a very few species of animals live in Ma'īlūla. Therefore, the variety of different animals that occur in the proverbs there are astonishing. Animals appear in 108 of the 366 proverbs in Ẓarẓūra Ruzḳalla's collection. Of the 34 different animals, there are seventeen mammals, seven birds, six insects, two reptiles, one fish, and one worm.

1.1. Mammals

The mammals most frequently represented in the proverbs may all be found in Maʿlūla. The exception is camels, which have not been seen in Maʿlūla for quite some time. But in the Muslim population of Maʿlūla and in the neighbouring Aramaic Muslim villages of Baxʿa and Ġubbʿadīn, camels were common in the past century.

Table 1: Mammals and the number of proverbs involving them

Animals	Number of Proverbs	Animals	Number of Proverbs
donkey	16	dog	10
cat	6	goat	6
camel	6	horse	5
cattle	5	sheep	4
lion	3	bear	2
monkey	2	mouse	2
buffalo	1	fox	1
hyaena	1	mule	1
pig	1		

Of the mammals that rarely appear in the proverbs, only mice and mules can be found in Maʿlūla. This may be the reason why these animals are rarely attested in the proverbs. In earlier times, lions, bears, and foxes may have been found in Maʿlūla. It is very likely that the disappearance of these animals from proverbs followed their disappearance from the environment.

1.1.1. The Donkey (*ḥmōra*)

Many donkeys could be found in Maʿlūla in the past century. Nearly every house had one to carry things through the narrow alleys to the houses on the ‘rock’. Donkeys are considered stupid and in the proverbs they represent stupid people, especially when

they do not recognise the value or beauty of a thing, or when they are too stupid to live a nice life despite wealth, as in example (1).

- (1) *Ġanyin w-bixlin ex ḥmaṛō:*
Ṭōʿnin dahba w-ōxlin sʿarō.
 ‘Rich misers are like donkeys:
 They carry gold, but they eat barley.’

1.1.2. The Dog (*xalpa*)

Dogs in the proverbs of Maʿlūla are considered deceitful, egoistic, and of bad origin. Therefore, people from families with a bad reputation are compared to dogs, for example in the proverb in (2).

- (2) *Ti ōbu xalpa, lōzem yʿaww.*
 ‘If his father is a dog, he must bark.’

1.1.3. The Lion (*sabʿa*)

The dog’s positive counterpart is the lion, who is considered generous.

- (3) *Xalpa ōxel w-mhamhem,*
W-sabʿa ōxel w-maṭʿem.
 ‘The dog eats and barks,
 And the lion eats and lets others eat.’

1.1.4. The Camel (*ḡamla*)

The camel is an animal of high value, therefore the proverb says:

- (4) *In naḡpič ngōb ḡamla.*
W-in riḥmič rḥōm batra.
 ‘When you steal, steal a camel.
 And when you love, love (a girl as beautiful as) the full moon.’

1.1.5. The Cat (*keṭṭa*) and the Mouse (*ka'pra*)

Proverbs with cats are often connected with mice. The cat represents authority: if there is no authority, everybody can do what they want:

- (5) *Agibat keṭṭa w-iṣṭa' ka'prō.*

‘While the cat’s away, the mice will play.’

On the other hand, it is not good to follow cats, because they are interested only in mice, and not in important things:

- (6) *Ti čaba'al keṭṭa yaḍa'al waḵril ka'prō.*

‘The one who follows the cat, knows (where) the mouse-hole (is).’

1.2. Birds

The generic words for bird (*ṭayra*) or a small bird like a sparrow (*ṣafrōna*) appear in four proverbs. Hens occur in three proverbs, while owls, ravens and pigeons are found in two proverbs each. The eagle and the goose occur only once.

1.2.1. The Hen (*ṭinaḡelča*)

Apart from hens, there are no other domesticated birds in Ma'lūla. Therefore, the hen unsurprisingly occurs three times in the proverbs, each time with the egg, as in example (7):

- (7) *Be'ṭil imōḍ w-la ṭinaḡelčil emḥar.*

‘The egg of today is better than the hen of tomorrow.’¹

¹ Lit. ‘The egg of today and not the hen of tomorrow.’

1.2.2. The Goose (*wazza*)

There are no geese in Maṭlūla, as there is neither a river nor a lake. But one proverb exists in which a goose occurs. It is said of a woman who loves a child who is not hers:

- (8) *Ex wazza, ḥinniṭa billa bezza.*
 ‘Like a goose, affection without breast.’

1.3. Insects

The fly and the louse appear three times, the bee and the hornet twice, and the flea and the dung beetle once each in the proverbs of Maṭlūla. Insects often express worthlessness or slight value.

1.3.1. The Louse (*xlammta*)

The worthlessness and insignificance of the louse is clearly expressed in the proverb:

- (9) *Ġanna billa ommṭa tōba xlammta.*
 ‘A garden without people is worth a louse.’

1.3.2. The Hornet (*‘ur‘ra*)

The proverb also classifies the hornet as worthless:

- (10) *In battax debša tāx l-ḡapp.*
‘Ur‘ra debša ču mapp.
 ‘If you need honey, come to me.
 The hornet gives no honey.’

1.3.3. The Flea (*furṭaʿna*)

A person who always bothers and gets on someone's nerves is compared with a flea:

(11) *Ex xoppa b-ʿayna w-ex furṭaʿna b-eḏna.*

‘Like a thorn in the eye and like a flea in the ear.’

1.4. Reptiles and Other Animals

Among the many reptiles that exist in Maʿlūla, like geckos and lizards, only the snake is represented (in six proverbs). It seems that geckos and lizards also go unrepresented in Arabic proverbs.² The frog, fish, and worm each appear in only one proverb.

1.4.1. The Snake (*ḥūya*)

I will end my contribution with an Aramaic proverb from Maʿlūla that is the equivalence to the English proverb: ‘A burnt child dreads the fire’:

(12) *Ti ʔareṭle ḥūya zōyaʿ m-ḥabla.*

‘The one whom a snake has bitten is afraid of the rope.’

² Several Arabs questioned could not give me an example of a proverb in which a gecko or a lizard appears.

2.0. Appendix: List of Animals in the Proverbs of Ma'lūla

Animals	Number of Proverbs	Animals	Number of Proverbs
bear (<i>toppa</i>)	2	goose (<i>wazza</i>)	1
bee (<i>ḏapparīta</i>)	2	hen (<i>tināḡelča</i>)	3
bird (<i>ṣafrōna</i> , <i>ṭayra</i>)	4	hornet (<i>ʿurʿra</i>)	2
buffalo (<i>ḡamōša</i>)	1	horse (<i>sūsča</i>)	5
camel (<i>ḡamla</i>)	6	hyaena (<i>ḏabʿa</i>)	1
cat (<i>keṭṭa</i>)	6	lion (<i>sabʿa</i>)	3
cattle (<i>kinyōna</i> , <i>ṭawrʿrča</i>)	5	louse (<i>xlamṡta</i>)	3
dog (<i>xalpa</i>)	10	monkey (<i>ḡerta</i>)	2
donkey (<i>ḡmōra</i>)	16	mouse (<i>ḡaʿpra</i>)	2
dung beetle (<i>ḡluffaṣīṭa</i>)	1	mule (<i>baḡla</i>)	1
eagle (<i>nesra</i>)	1	owl (<i>būmča</i>)	2
fish (<i>samʿkṭa</i>)	1	pig (<i>ḡzīra</i>)	1
flea (<i>furṭaʿna</i>)	1	pigeon (<i>yawna</i>)	2
fly (<i>ḏappōba</i>)	3	raven (<i>ʿaḡōna</i>)	2
fox (<i>ṭaʿla</i>)	1	sheep (<i>xarōfa</i> , <i>ōna</i>)	4
frog (<i>wurtaʿna</i>)	1	snake (<i>ḡūya</i>)	6
goat (<i>ʿezza</i>)	6	worm (<i>ṭawlaʿča</i>)	1

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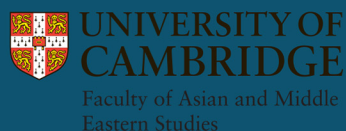
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